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THREE ESSAYS,

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

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ESSAY FIRST,

ON THE TRUE DIVINITY OF

JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

ESSAY SECOND,

ON THE

Unalterable Love of God,

As exemplified in bearing with, feeling for, and healing Backsliders.

ESSAY THIRD,

ON THE

GOSPEL ORDINANCE,

OF BELIEVERS' BAPTISM BY IMMERSION.

WITH

Several Pieces of Original Poetry.

BY THOMAS LOUD.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ACCOUNT OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE AUTHOR,

And a dedication of himself to God and his work.

I also could speak as ye do, if your soul were in my soul's stead. I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you; but I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.—Job, xvi. 4, 5.

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GENERAL PREFACE.

The author of the following essays has no pretensions to the advantages some suppose themselves to possess; by which, through the vanity of their own minds, and the fulsome adulations of their unthinking admirers, are often inflated with pride and egotism.

But while he makes this concession, he does not think it needful, nor does he feel at all disposed, to make any disgusting apology for thus appearing before the public.—He feels it to be his unalienable privilege, even in a plain way, to say with Elihu, in the book of Job, "I also will show mine opinion." Yet he hopes that, whatever defects there may be in style, in composition, or even grammar, that they are not of that description as to obscure the sense, much less to "darken counsel by words without knowledge," and thereby expose a good cause (by defective pleading) to the scorn of scorners, and contempt of the contemptuous.

I have not the vanity, nor am I so ignorant of mankind, as to suppose that the men of this world, or the wisdom of this world, will approbate what I have written; but as there are some men of plain, as well as others of refined understandings, most of whom can relish nothing but the polish of the schools, and the charms of elegant composition; while the former, if godly, have a true taste for spiritual wisdom, and can readily excuse rudeness in speech, so that the speaker, or writer, is not rude in knowledge, or a *novice* in divine things.—For the benefit of such, especially, I have written;—plain men need, and plain men love plain truth.

Therefore, with that measure of talent God has bestowed, and that acquaintance with the oracles of God which "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ," has in a long and much varied train of experience given me, I have taken the field, and I may say, that in the first and last essay, it is the *polemic field*. Some, no doubt, will think and say, that my polemic arm is weak, too weak, for the conflict, and that I am not armed aright, because in plainness of speech, "in words easy to be understood," I have endeavoured to state, to elucidate, to advocate and defend, in my first essay, one of the most important doctrines revealed in the word of God, namely, the true divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. A doctrine on which the hopes of the truly godly, in every age, have rested, or rather on him of whom the doctrine makes such an honorable and interesting report, and there only a *good hope* can *rest*.

In the investigation and defence of this truth, I have chiefly contented myself with what God has been pleased to make known to us on the subject, judging that he is infinitely best acquainted with the modus of his own existence.—I have, therefore, not much regarded the depths of Satan, which some men speak, who are opponents to this all important and fundamental truth. It will be easily seen that my object, in the prosecution of this subject, has been not only to bring to view a few of the express testimonies of scripture, which clearly prove "the *Word was God*," and that "there are *three* that bear record in heaven, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Spirit*." But in addition to this, I have endeavored to shew, from divine authority, that Christ our Immanuel, possesses those incommunicable perfections, and performs those stupendous works, that at once declare his eternal power and Godhead.—And in such lofty views of the author and finisher of our faith, it becomes the humble followers of the Lamb, who have renounced their own wisdom and "become fools that

they might be wise;" it becomes such, I say, to "sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him (saith the prophet) be your fear, and let him be your dread: And *He* (even the Lord of Hosts himself) shall be for a sanctuary, (to the humble and sensibly lost sinner;") but (to the self-righteous, to the proud, to those who in their own eyes, are wise above what is written) "for a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence." Isa. viii. 13, 14.

In this essay, although I have wrote principally for the benefit of the humble disciple, yet what is wrote is designed to bear on the leviathans and behemoths of the day, with a view to shew them that "they greatly err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God," our Saviour, in that display thereof which makes his people willing. Ps. cx. 3. And I should utterly despair of doing them any good, seeing "the sword of him that layeth at them cannot hold," only that I read that "He who made them can cause *his sword* to approach unto them." That sword, in the present case, is the sword which I have chosen, and it is none other than his word, the sword of the Spirit. Should that sword pierce between the joints of their harness, it will make them, as Milton says of Satan, "writhe to and fro convolved." And should that sword be used in mercy by God, it will subdue *them* to the obedience of the faith, "and to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," and then they will be content to "make mention of his righteousness, and his only," and say with the prophet, "This is our *God*, *he* will save us. So may it be.—Amen.

In my second essay I have treated on "The unalterable love of God," and especially as that love is displayed and made manifest "in bearing with, feeling for, and healing backsliders!"

A most endearing subject; but it is a subject too much neglected, although the sacred page is merciful-

ly replete therewith. To this truth every one who knows the plague of his own heart, will readily subscribe, and say with Mr. Hart:

> Were not thy love as firm as free,
> Thou soon would'st take it, Lord, from me.

In this essay there are some strong things advanced; but I feel a satisfactory and happy conviction, that I have not passed the line of demarcation marked out by the divine word. And I hope and believe, that what is advanced will be found much to the benefit (through a divine unction and blessing) of those for whom especially it was drawn up; and I trust that what I have said is so guarded, that none but the whole hearted who are at ease in Zion, will find any thing of which they will be disposed seriously to find fault. That men who "know not what manner of spirit they are of," should find materials for censure, will not surprise me; yet I feel confident I have taken no ground but what is tenable; but for such objectors, however, in this essay I did not write, except indeed to shew them by contrast, the emptiness of their profession.

But should such, or even any of the *godly*, who have much of the leaven of the Pharisees about them, be still disposed to object to any thing here advanced, my advice to such, or rather the command of Christ to such is, "Go and learn what this meaneth, I will have *mercy* and not sacrifice." And I wish all such to consider the last clause as a command obligatory on *them*, as well as a gracious declaration from the mouth of God, of what *he* will do.—As a command it enjoins that such should not sacrifice the comfort and reputation of others on the altar of their self-righteousness, but rather exercise *mercy* towards them, "considering themselves also in the flesh," and "bear each others burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ; who will have *mercy* on whom he will have *mercy*, and shew compassion to whom he will shew compas-

sion;" even although, like the elder brother in the parable, some should complain that comparitive neglect has been shewn to their superior correctness. "I never" (say such) "transgressed thy will at any time, yet thou *never* gavest me a kid." What arrogance! But the kind Father whose heart overflowed with parental tenderness, says, "it was meet that we should make merry, for this *my son*, was *dead*, and is *alive*, was *lost*, and is *found*."—Go thou reader and do likewise.

In the third and last essay, I have endeavored to state, elucidate and defend, a divinely instituted ordinance of the church of Christ, or of the gospel dispensation, and so to meet and refute the arguments, and oppose the false reasonings of *gainsayers*, as may help to inform and establish the weak and the wavering of the flock of Christ, and furnish them with that with which they may "answer those who trouble them;" and this I trust will be found to be the tendency and happy effect of each and all of the following essays.

What little I have done I endeavoured to do as well, that is, as correct as I could, and it is no grief of heart to me, and I believe it will be no loss to my readers, that it is "not with excellency of speech, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth," but I trust it is in those words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth." 1 Cor. ii. 1. 4. 13. thereby commending what I have wrote, not to the *skittish and wayward fancy*, but to the conscience of every man in the sight of God, by a manifestation of the truth.

One thing has been scrupulously kept in view in these essays, namely, to state and defend the truth as it is in Christ, and to advocate a positive institution of the head of the church, both as it respects the *subject*, the *mode*, and the *design*, in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, as much so, at least, as my acquaintance with, and recollection of, the lively ora-

cles and the Spirit's teaching, has enabled me, and I feel a satisfactory consciousness, that my object, in each attempt, has been to promote the divine glory and human happiness, by pleading for truth, and by opposing error; and that in so doing I have adduced no passage of scripture, nor have I used any argument, or adopted any mode of reasoning, to refute what I hold an error, or to establish what I believe to be truth, but such as I verily believed bore directly on the subject under discussion; and I trust that a conviction of these facts in the perusal of these essays, will pervade the minds of the readers.

When a more than ordinary zeal is manifested, and talents of various grades are pressed into the service, of gross and *dangerous errors*, and of an unscriptural practice, it behooves those who *possess "one Faith,"* who *confess "one Lord,"* and who hold and practise *"one Baptism,"* and who profess generally a love for the simplicity of the gospel—a correct administration of gospel ordinances, "esteeming all God's precepts concerning all things to be right," and who hold it highly culpable to "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." It behooves all such, I say, under such circumstances, to endeavour to guard the fold of Christ against every innovation, every thing calculated to beguile the unwary, and sap the foundation of a poor sinner's hope.—To accomplish such desirable ends, the following essays were penned; and it is hoped that it will appear, on a fair and prayerful perusal, that the object aimed at, in the last essay in particular, is not to *unchristian*, but to *confute;* not to *reproach*, but to *convince;* not to *inflame* with party zeal, but to *instruct*, to *encourage* and to *establish*.

As I am one of those who are unknown, yet well known, I have, contrary to my original intention, prefixed to these essays a very brief account of the way in which the Lord my God has led me. We are commanded to call it to mind, and if so, we may

surely record it without just offence. The narrative must speak for itself, I will only say, it is as correct as my recollection will serve, so far as it goes.—I will, therefore, leave it and the dedication that accompanies it, with the essays and myself, the unworthy author, in the hands of Him *in* whom I live, who hath said, "Acknowledge me in all thy ways, and I will direct thy paths."

THOMAS LOUD.

AN ACCOUNT

OF

God's Dealings with the Author of the following Essays.

THE following brief narrative, or rather epitome, of God's dealings with my soul, is with considerable reluctance submitted to the press, (among other reasons,) least I should be thought to obtrude that on my readers, in which they might judge themselves so remotely, if at all, interested; and, also, least some might be disposed to charge me with egotism. To the last surmise, if such should exist, I will only observe, that what follows is not a statement of any thing done *by* me, but of what God has done *for* me; and therefore the charge of egotism or self-praise must fall to the ground: and, as to my obtruding on my readers what they may, peradventure, judge of so little worth, I will only say, I shall be sorry "If the turning of a sinner from the error of his ways, and saving a soul from death," should be of so small account in the eyes of any of my readers. However, should the apathy and indifference of the mass of professors be such as to preclude any pleasure or thankfulness, on reading such recitals of God's sovereign mercy, we know that the angels in heaven, who can best appreciate the importance of such things, rejoice; and surely the most simple, happy and fruitful of God's believing family, who are most solicitous for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of perishing sinners, will rejoice also—and while such narratives afford matter of thankfulness to those who have obtained (as the gift of God) like precious faith, *in* the righteous-

ness of God our Saviour, it may also be owned of God to some readers, to shew them that their religion is vain; that they have only a name to live, while, in truth, they are dead; and, farther, it may please a gracious God, by it to encourage some one patiently to wait, and quietly to hope for the salvation of God. We have, my readers, much superficial religion, and much superficial preaching, that has nothing in it which says to the awakened sinner, "this is the way, walk ye in it;" nothing to comfort those that mourn, to "succour the tempted, to lift up the hands that hang down, to confirm the feeble knees, to say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, thy God will come, and he will save thee." And permit me here to add, that my fear is, that we shall have no small increase of such preaching, seeing churches, even Baptist churches, seem much disposed to set *up* schools, and look *to* schools for pastors, instead of looking directly to, and depending on the head of the church, the Lord of the harvest, who has promised pastors after his own heart. But, no; that would not comport with the spirit of the times—a man must now be an eloquent man, and an orator, a "master of plausible speech;" though very many, yea, almost all school-bred preachers are (with all their acquirements and self-importance) mere babes, to say the best, in spiritual knowledge, and apparently almost total strangers to experimental theology; while the scribe, well instructed into the kingdom of God, is slighted, and though (professedly) highly esteemed as a brother, not allowed the use of a pulpit. These things ought not thus to be; it is contrary to the genius of the gospel, dishonorable to the Redeemer, and detrimental to the household of faith: and, before I return from this digression, which was altogether unintentional, I must be permitted to add, that the practice above alluded to, involves in it the prostitution, in some cases, of the finest talents, and much waste of valuable time, that ought to be devoted to the more immediate service

of the sanctuary; and in addition to that, much treasure is wasted in stipends, and too frequently in the support of idle boys, (called pious youths,) that might much better be employed in erecting neat and commodious places of worship, and frugally supporting those whom God has called, and will yet call into the ministry, making his own selection, as he sees good, from among the learned and the unlearned, without the aid of colleges. Let it not be supposed that I advocate ignorance—I detest it in a pulpit; but many unlearned men are wise in the things of God; much more so than some of their learned rivals—Nor let it be supposed, that I would cast a slight on acquired knowledge—I admire it in its place; but what I mean this philippic to bear on, and what I mean to censure, is the trade of *parson making*, and what is closely allied to it, the *trade* of *preaching;* and were I to indulge my own feelings, I should not stop here, for much more might be said on the subject, even by me; for I have seen much, heard much, and observed much, very censurable in the practice now inveighed against—but I must return to that which is more immediately before me. I have already supposed some instances of usefulness to result from the narrative to follow these preliminary remarks; such as thankfulness to God, warning to the superficial professor, and encouragement to the honest seeker, "who is enquiring the way to Zion with his face thitherward." I will now add, that, peradventure, it may dispose some to say, "Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in him." It will not be denied, but that many of the children of God, have left their experience on record, not for their own praise, (for in truth it has often been to their dispraise,) but for the honor of God, and the benefit of men; but it may be objected, that they were men of eminence, and occupied conspicuous stations in the church, and that the reverse is my case; (this is only true in part.) Whatever they were, it was by the grace of God, that they were what they were;

they had nothing but what they had received. In whatever, therefore, they may have differed from me, they had nothing to boast of, (though too many have boasted, and do boast,) for a man can receive nothing, worth his having, except it be given him from heaven, and God giveth his gifts to every man, severally as he will, so that "he who gathereth much hath nothing over, and he that gathereth little hath no lack." Should any be disposed to despise, or even reproach, I hope I shall not be greatly moved—but, on the other hand, should it be rendered useful, through the blessing of God, for any of the objects I have before stated, I hope I shall be thankful, and that God, who remembered me in my low estate, and who doth still remember me, will be honored.

Having premised thus much, I shall proceed, in the language of the Psalmist, to say, "Come hither all *ye* that *fear God*, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul."

After the lapse of near forty years, I find it to be somewhat difficult to ascertain and state with correctness, the precise time *when*, and the particular circumstance *by which* my attention was first excited to the all-important concerns of the soul; by what it was and when it was, that I was first stirred up to regard the things that make for peace. I need hardly say that my former life was "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience."

Being left very young destitute of parental restraint, and grossly neglected in my apprenticeship, I pursued the corrupt inclination of a depraved heart, and fell under the influence of wicked example, to the full extent that means and years permitted. But God, who watched over me for good, and preserved me in Christ, from destruction, while I was avowedly his enemy, was pleased to make me feel something of the fruit of my doings, by suffering me to be entangled, I

will not say by the trammels of justice, but by those of injustice. I mean the *Impress* laws of Great Britain; through which I became an inhabitant of an English man of war, which, to say the least of, is an awful school of vice; (though I believe that the public ships of some nations are, if possible, much worse, where crimes of the worst character are almost licensed, that would be punished with death in an English or American ship of war.) But, to return: after suffering much in circumstances so dissimilar to my former habits, I became a prisoner of war, in the town of Trenton, New-Jersey, in the year 1782, where I had some very serious convictions of sin, occasioned by visits paid to two poor men in the same prison under sentence of death, (who were mercifully reprieved under the gallows.) I *felt* myself to be far more miserable than they *appeared* to be, and had it been possible, would gladly have stood in their place, as they *appeared* to cherish a lively and happy hope, that their sins were forgiven, and an expectation of being received into everlasting rest, while I was the subject of a fearful looking for of judgment: but, though I can hardly think that my convictions were of a spiritual nature, or such as constitute the beginnings of a good work of grace—yet I did not entirely lose them, in the midst of much wickedness, in myself and my companions in captivity; and when I was exchanged, and restored to my native country, (which took place in the spring of 1783,) I was induced, from what I had been led to discover of my sins, to frequent the church much more than is usual with men in such circumstances. The love of sin strove successfully to lead me to the commission of much evil, and the fear of wrath dragged me to pay some occasional attention to the form of godliness, though only the form, without the power, both in myself and those among whom I generally met. But that God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and brings about his designs of mercy by what means and circumstances he pleases, was

pleased so to order it, that, being in company with some fellow workmen who were professors of religion, in the latter end of 1783, I heard them conversing about a Mr. Romaine, who they spoke so highly of, that (under my then exercises,) I was induced to make an appointment to go and hear him on the next Lord's day; and I found him to be as they described him, and, to speak in their language, "a wonderful man;" for even then, blind as I was, I discovered something in his preaching suited to my case; for I had been led to discover enough, as I have already premised, to convince me that I was in many, very many things, a foul sinner—though as to the depravity of my nature, I had no just conception of it, (any more than I had of the way of life;) the fountain of the great deep, (so to speak) was not broken up—I knew not the plague of my heart, and thought reformation was in my own power, and vainly judged *that* was sufficient, though I could make no progress in breaking off my sins by righteousness, though I strove, and strove hard, to accomplish it. But headstrong lusts are not thus to be tamed; inveterate disease is not thus to be cured; a deep seated leprosy is not thus to be eradicated;

> "For the more I strove against their power,
> I sinn'd and stumbled but the more."

But now under the gospel, as preached by Mr. Romaine, God was pleased to make known to me what before I was a stranger to; and, strange to tell, though I felt as if I were tormented before my time, yet I was constrained to go again, and again, though I felt things to get worse and worse with me; so that with increasing pain, I was made to feel, as well as see, that all I did, or said, or thought, was sinful, exceeding sinful, and that the heart, the fountain, the spring of all action, was corrupt, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Resolutions, vows, oaths, and efforts of every description were vain. I have, under this confusion of mind and distress of soul,

even partook of the memorials of the Lord's death; thinking, that, surely that would be an effectual preventive of sin. But no—all was as weak as a rope of sand, and under these feelings of depravity and accumulated guilt, I became a Missibab, a terror round about, a terror to myself. The glory and greatness of God as displayed in the visible heavens, has oft appalled my heart, and made it sink, as lead in the mighty waters. And though I did not say in the morning, would God it were night, (for I dreaded the night,) yet I truly said at night, would God it were morning, for I dreaded to close my eyes in sleep, lest the pit of hell should shut its mouth upon me, and often when I awoke I have been surprised to a degree I cannot now express, that I was out of hell; and so horribly keen were the forebodings of misery, that I have, if it be possible, wished to know the worst, thinking either that hell was not so intolerable as I apprehended, or that I should be strong to suffer, as to do, (as Milton has it) and in this state of mind, while all refuge failed me, no eye seemed to pity, nor hand appeared to help me, friends and acquaintance stood aloof from my sore indeed. These distressing exercises, more or less fearful and appalling, under the heaviness of which my heart stooped, were continued somewhere about two years, and though my soul was most earnestly hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and exceedingly diligent, from a distressing sense of need, in seeking by all means for a way of escape from the stormy wind and tempest, and although that way was clearly pourtrayed before me in a very able and luminous gospel ministry, yet it was in a great degree hid from my eyes. The power of grievous temptations, the prevalence of strong corruptions, and the blind legality of my mind, together with the baneful influence of legal preaching and legal reading, (for I resorted to every thing and ran every where for help;) and among the many things I then read was a book intitled *Allen's*

Alarm, and another called *Baxter's Call to the Unconverted.* These works, as I then felt, and do now verily believe, are more calculated to drive a sinner to desperation and suicide, than to lead the soul to Christ, which certainly they never did as means accomplish, any more than the Whole Duty of Man, Thomas A. Kempis's Imitation of Christ, falsely so called, or the Alcoran of Mahomed; these things, connected with the great disadvantage of having no one to converse with who seemed to know any thing of the way in which I was led, made me of necessity "sit alone and keep silence, and put my mouth in the dust, if so be there might be hope." I saw and felt, what I doubt but few feel, namely, an end to all perfection in myself, and I also saw and felt that the commands of God were exceeding broad; but in the midst of all this distress and confusion of mind, depravity of heart, and temptations of Satan, I had now and then a ray of light under the word break in upon my mind that gave such views of the way of peace, as for the moment made my heart glad and leap for joy: but these favoured times were short and confused; they were the joys of a budding hope rather than possession—discoveries of the *possibility* of being saved, rather than a belief that I should be saved. But that God who was leading a blind sinner in a way that he did not know, and who was making me come after him in chains, was pleased, by slow degrees, to make darkness light before me, and crooked things straight; but hope deferred did in very deed make my heart sick. The racking anxiety—the tormenting apprehensions—the corroding doubts and fears that are endured under such exercises, no tongue can tell, no heart conceive, but the heart of those who are exercised therewith; but I am happy to have to relate, that several times about this period God was in mercy pleased under the ministry of a Mr. Johnson, a Church of England clergyman, but a man of truth, to give me to see some of the marks and evidences of the new birth; a subject on which he long dwelt, but they were

but glimmerings of light that soon vanished, and were succeeded by doubts and fears of the most distressing character, so that I often resolved that I would not hear him any more on the subject; but when Lord's day returned my resolves gave way, and I was, as it were, led by an invisible hand to hear him again. The preaching also of a Mr. Foster, another Episcopal gospel minister, was very much blessed to me, by keeping alive my desires and encouraging my hopes, particularly under a discourse from these words: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The characteristics described I believed I was the subject of, and I had a flattering hope that the promise would be fulfilled in me; but even yet hopes were very transcient and feeble, and fears strong and almost permanent; and while I was passing through these troubled waters, I think in the spring of 1786, I had a dream of rather a singular nature, and as it was not without effect on my mind, I shall make free to relate it, although I am fully aware that many are disposed to treat such things and the relators of them, with something like contempt. But when I consider that some of the best and wisest of men have not scrupled to record some particular dreams, John Bunyan not the least among them, and especially when I read in the book of Job, that "God speaketh once, yea twice to man, in a dream, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering on their beds, then he openeth their ears and sealeth their instruction:" When I consider these things, and also the many instances recorded in scripture, where ordinary men have had dreams of singular import, and sometimes had them interpreted by the servants of God, I feel fully justified in the relation of mine, which, as near as I can now recollect, was as follows.

I dreamed that I was sitting with the woman I kept company with, close by a long lake of water that extended beyond view along the foot of a very steep hill, rising from the horizon at least at the an-

gle of forty-five degrees, on the top of this hill stood a man inviting me up, and his invitation excited in me an ardent desire to ascend; but I greatly feared the attempt, for if I should slip destruction appeared inevitable, as I must of necessity roll into and perish in the lake at the bottom, and I much wished that I had long spikes in my shoes, to prevent the much dreaded accident; but while these were the cogitations of my mind, I thought that the "power of God would not suffer me to fall;" this thought so encouraged me that I immediately made the attempt, taking great care every step, to insert my foot firmly in the earth, and the path on which I had to ascend, went in an oblique direction, by which the difficulty of ascent was greatly lessened; and with this precaution and advantage, I arrived safely, and much sooner than I expected, on the summit of the hill: along which ran a level margin of a few yards width. The man whom I had seen from the bottom, and who invited me up, stood here, and two others, and waving his right hand, he says, "behold the beauty of the promised land;" and looking, I saw before me a large quantity of fresh plowed land, thrown up into small hills of considerable elevation; between which ran beautiful streams of water, intersecting with each other, which the man told me were to water the land, that it might bring forth its fruit plentifully. Before us was a kind of boundary wall, and, I think, a small ditch, over which he handed me into the promised land. On the inside of the wall, close by where we entered, was a deep and dark cavern, the descent into which was almost perpendicular—the man, my guide, charged me to beware of it; for, he said, it was the devil's pit; and when he saw me alarmed, (for I stood, as it were, on its crumbling verge,) he encouraged me not to be afraid, for that the devil would be destroyed soon. After I had been some time with my guide, and the other two, surveying the promised land, the *woman*, who I had left at the bottom of the hill, on the verge

of the lake, appeared on the summit and chided me for my stay. I then attempted to come out, but my guide prevented, and brought me a book, in which I was to write my name among very many others. I did so, and when I wrote it, it struck me as very singular, that instead of being wrote with *ink*, it was wrote with *blood*. Against every name a very small sum of money was set, which I understood to be the perquisites of those who shewed the place. I then put as large a sum as any I saw, to my name, and paid the cash, and then made the second attempt to egress, but was again stopped by my attentive guide, who said he would give me something to keep in remembrance of the place: so saying, he fetched me a large bough of evergreen, myrtle, or box, apparently, which he called Isthmus. I asked him if it was the Isthmus recorded in scripture—he replied it was. I then again attempted, and was permitted to come out; and I gave the bough of evergreen into the hand of the woman who was waiting for me, and immediately about half of the bough drooped exceedingly—we then, in company, walked about a large field, in which we then appeared to be, and at different places we saw several traps, made of oak, for catching game; and what struck me in my dream, was the singular circumstance that none of them had the fall, or tumbler, which is intended to secure the prey.

After this I had lost the woman, and found myself in company with two men, walking along a road which had high banks on its sides. After travelling some time, we came to a rather singular appearance in the bank, somewhat analagous to what foxes make. One of the men said, *that* was the *devil's house;* and directly opposite was, as it were, the remains of a fortification, or breast work, which appeared to be beaten down to two or three feet high. One of the men exclaimed, "*that is the devil's battery.*" I immediately asked, who would first storm the fort—and one of the men instantly leaped the wall, and I next followed: and

when we had entered this supposed fort, there stood a considerable number in a row of the same kind of traps I had seen before, and they were in the same incomplete and inefficient state; that is, they had no tumblers; consequently, incapable of holding the prey. On seeing such a number, I exclaimed, with some emotion, "Surely, *this is a trap manufactory*"—and after some more observations in this place, which escaped my memory, we appeared to walk into the adjoining lands, which were very woody; and I awoke, and so much was my mind impressed with this dream, that I directly jumped out of bed and wrote it down, but the copy has been many years lost—yet the substance, I believe, will never be erased from my mind. I shall make no observations on it; but leave my readers to make their own reflections, and proceed with my narrative, by observing, that some parts of the works of Mr. John Bunyan, (the venerable and well taught author of the Pilgrim's Progress,) were made of special service to me; and particularly his treatise entitled, "The Doctrines of *Law* and *Grace* unfolded," and his tract called, "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners," the mere title of which made my heart bound with hope, and its contents, which are a relation of his own experience, gave me much instruction and great encouragement: but, though I received much benefit from the sources I have named, I believe the preaching of Mr. Romaine, (a master in Israel and a scribe well instructed,) was more owned of God than all other means.

In his ministry, the ruined state of sinners, the fulness and sufficiency of the Saviour, as Lord of all by whom he preached peace, and the sovereign freeness of divine grace, together with the indispensable and irresistible agency of the holy spirit, and the exercises of the poor sinner in passing from death to life, were constantly and ably set forth; and God blessed his labors to many, very many, and, I trust, to me also, though I am nothing, and worse than nothing,

the chief of sinners: and as his labors were frequently blessed to me, so as to cause a lively hope, (I trust a good hope, through grace,) to spring up in my heart. He seldom preached, in season or out of season, but I was glad to embrace the opportunity to hear him; and on Good Friday morning, 1786, I was more sensibly favored than ever before, under a discourse on the crucifixion of Christ, whose name had now become to me as ointment poured forth, and I loved him with my whole heart, and ran about the streets of London in the afternoon, to find some preaching, thinking that the bare mention of his name, would increase my joy in the Lord. But I had not the happiness of hearing another sermon until night, when Mr. Foster (before named,) spoke from the words of the Psalmist, "The redemption of the soul is precious, it ceaseth forever"—under which discourse I was much instructed on the important subject of redemption: but not so happy as in the morning; nor was I for several weeks after, though I followed hard after him who was powerfully drawing me "with the cords of love, as with the bands of a man." But on the Thursday week before Whitsunday, I was most happily visited with the plenitude of divine compassion, under a rich gospel discourse, preached by Mr. Romaine, from those sweet and all-interesting words in John—"I ascend to *my Father*, and to *your Father;* to *my God*, and to *your God*." Under that never to be forgotten sermon, the spirit of God, in mercy, so applied the truth preached, that I was brought fully into the liberty of the gospel. Faith, as the gift of God, came by hearing, even faith *in* him of whom I heard, so that my sins were removed, and my interest in a precious Almighty Saviour, who saved me *to* the uttermost, (*from* the uttermost guilt and wretchedness,) and my relationship to my heavenly Father, was happily made known, believed, and rejoiced in, for that continuance, and in that degree, which before I was a stranger to. I seemed now to have nothing

to ask for, (comparatively speaking:)—my cup of joy ran over—all was peace, joy, thanksgiving and praise. Before this, the thing I hoped for being deferred, made my heart sick, and I had long and often poured out my complaints with groanings, that could not be uttered, and had often been driven from my knees by the force of inward terror, and an awful apprehension and conception of diabolical presence. But now, what I had long and ardently desired, was *come*, and it was, in truth, a *tree of life;* for my soul did indeed magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God, my Saviour; and, as before, the glory of the visible heavens did appal my soul, so now, more than once, in a certain indescribable happy revery, I have anxiously watched for the opening of the heavens, and the second appearing of my Lord, who was dearer to me than life. Indeed, in a certain sense, life had lost its value, and I often regretted that I was a young man, and was ready to envy those who, either by old age or inveterate disease, seemed tottering on the grave, and, as it were, ready to launch away to that land where the great, glorious and precious Saviour of the *lost* is seen as he is, and the emanations of infinite felicity from his fulness, and the beatific contemplation of his uncreated glory, enjoyed without alloy—without a cloud, and without a period.

And although, after this, I had short intervals of misgivings, and even sometimes my life hung in doubt before me, on account of the striving and working of corruptions, which I expected had been all dead, to rise no more. Yet, nevertheless, generally speaking, I was happy in Christ, believing that I should not die but live, and the good spirit of God was pleased, gradually, to establish me in the faith, and open my understanding, to comprehend the way of life, and to know with a degree of clearness, *that truth*, by which I had been made free, though my knowledge of it when I was made free by it, was rude and circumscribed: but this growing in knowledge, or progressive illumina-

tion, was a slow work—I felt much, but knew but little; yet the leaven of grace and truth worked—the grain of mustard seed grew in a diligent and happy use of the means of grace, until my christian friends, who were *then* numerous and intelligent, became clamorous in urging me, and perseveringly solicitous to introduce me into public and useful life. What were the exercises of my mind, and what was the result of seven years earnest and continued importunity, I do not feel myself called on, nor disposed, at present, to delineate. But, perhaps, some may think, (if it was so,) their partial preference was ill judged, and did but flatter my vanity. Permit me to say, as to the last particular, I know the reverse—but be it so; that I was then flattered, I have had enough of late years to mortify my vanity, (if I am the subject of it) in being as a lamp despised in the thoughts of *those that are at* EASE. I am content, or, at least, I desire so to be; for why should a *living* man complain—a man for the punishment of his *sins;* and, I hope, I have not quite forgotten the proverb that speaketh unto mourners as to children: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him, for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." But here I am constrained to take up a lamentation, and say, would to God those happy, lively, humble and useful days, which were enjoyed for more than twenty years, had lasted even till now. But no, alas! that has not been my happiness. I have too just occasion to lament my unfruitfulness, and with one of old to say, my leanness, my leanness, woe unto me. "The heart, however, knoweth its own bitterness, (in declensions) and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joys" when grace reigns; often had I to use the language of the apostle, and say, "O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me;" and I trust it has also often been my privilege to add, even in deep waters, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord;" so

that I trust "I shall not die, but live." But, oh! the unfeeling scorning of those that are at ease!—the wicked triumph of the Philistines, who shout loud enough to be heard, "aha, aha, so would we have it. An evil disease cleaveth fast to him, and now that he is down he shall rise no more. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord—neither understand they his counsel—for he lifteth up those that fall. The Lord looseth the prisoners!" Yes, and taketh delight to shew himself rich in mercy to all that call upon him, because he delighteth in mercy, and knoweth whereof we are made, and remembereth that we are but dust, so that however tried we are not forsaken, often cast down but never destroyed, so that, though I am constrained to take up Mr. Hart's language and say, "from sinner and from saint I meet with many a blow;" and although "my own bad heart creates me smart, which none but God doth know," or can know; yet "remembering the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is *humbled* in me, *therefore* have I hope—and I trust it is my privilege to add with David, "this is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me;" and having the same spirit of faith, I will farther add with the Psalmist, "let them curse, but bless thou." For surely God hath, in my case, as well as in many thousands, "chosen the base things of the world, and things that are not," (of any value in the eyes of the world,) "hath God chosen to bring to nought things that are," (in high esteem with men,) for this gracious and all important end; an end that God never loses sight of in any of his gracious dispensations, namely, "that no flesh should glory in his presence."

And however *men* (whether wicked men or mistaken good men) may be disposed to despise, I know from the divine testimony and from happy experience, that "a broken and contrite spirit *God* will not despise"—"for he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;" nor will he ever do it, though

he might justly do so, as all affliction is, in some way or other, the fruit of evil doing: but, instead of dealing with deserved severity, "when the afflicted crieth he heareth him;" and in a thousand instances, as well as in my case, says, "I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comfort to *him*, and to his MOURNERS"—not his *accusers*—not his *mockers;* but his MOURNERS. Such as can, and do sympathise with, and pray for, and "treat not as an enemy, but admonish as a brother," the tempted and fallen. Such God will make participators in the comforts of the restored. These are a part of *his* ways, "who delighteth to *multiply*, to pardon, and to *pass by* the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage;" and who is he that will dare to "say to the Almighty, what dost thou"—"he that repliest against God, let him answer it." But I will subjoin (as I oft have done) the Psalmist's petition, and say, "restore to me (more fully) the joys of thy salvation"—and, I trust, I feel equally disposed to add, "uphold me with thy free spirit"—and I must be permitted yet farther to add, in his language, and, I trust, with equal propriety, "then will I, (when thou hast enlarged my heart, and healed the bones thou hast broken,) then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Amen, and amen; and let not the proud and the self-righteous chafe, while I add, *So be it.*—The Lord God of king David, the God of Israel, say amen, too.

Now Lord, to thee, my Saviour and my God,
Myself, and all I have, I dedicate.
Oh, take me as I am, though weak and vile,
And fashion me beneath thy forming hand,
(If thou see good,) to favour and promote,
As heretofore I've done, thy righteous cause,
To spread thy holy truth and wondrous fame.

But, oh! forbid that ever I should shun
Thy truth to speak, and counsel to declare,

As many do, to please poor dying men,
And keep back that which would their pride offend,
And shew, thereby, they seek not *them*, but *theirs*.

But, oh! my Lord, do thou thy dust instruct,
To warn the wicked of thy wrath to come,
And point the guilty to thy cleansing blood:
To preach forgiveness in thy saving name,
And shew that in thy righteousness divine,
Believing souls are freely justified,
From all the things thy righteous law condemns.

And thereby gather in as own'd of thee,
Thy chosen seed, to serve thee as their king.
To feed thy sheep and lambs beloved of thee,
And strengthen feeble knees, and lift the hands
That, in desponding fear, hang feebly down.
To succour instrumentally the souls
Whom Satan tempts, to sin or to despair.
To say to such as seem disposed to turn
To the right hand, or to the left—Behold
The *good old* way; the footsteps of the flock,
And *walk therein*—beside the shepherds tents—
So shall your weary souls find rest in God!
To seek the wand'rers from thy fold, and strive
As under-shepherd in thy hand, to bring
Them back to thee to taste forgiving love,
And dwell beneath the shadow of thy wings.
So shall thy name, my Lord, be magnified,
And sinners lost, be to the utmost saved!

Oh! open thou a door, which none can shut,
And say, "My servant enter in and occupy
Until I come, and faithful do my work—
The work of an Evangelist; and give
Full proof to all thy min'stry is from *me!*"

So speak, my Saviour God, thy servant hears—
And prays for grace and strength to do thy will,
And wisdom from above, his way to guide:
And while thy cause before thy foes he pleads.
From scourge of tongues unhallow'd him defend.

Thy word, as fire in his bones, thou knowest
Is often felt, and fain he'd pour it out abroad;
But patient wait my soul, and watch his leading hand.

Yet, while with warm solicitude I wait
To know thy will, I cannot help but pray.
Let not my lamp in dark obscurity go out,
Nor let my talents (be they what they may,)
Lie useless by, as in a napkin hid.

From thee, my gracious Lord, and not from men
They came—and to thy praise I'd them devote.
So shall the savor of thy name be spread,
And my *last* days, my God, shall be my *best!*

AN ESSAY

ON

THE TRUE DIVINITY

OF THE

LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"*Who is over all God blessed forever, amen.*"—Rom. ix. 5.

THE object of the following essay, is to illustrate and establish the words I have chosen for a motto; which are taken from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, ch. ix. v. 5. last clause. *Who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.*

In the preceding verse, and first clause of this, the apostle has been describing the character and privileges of his brethren, his kinsmen, according to the flesh, of whom he thus speaks, "Who are Israelites?" But "what advantage hath an Israelite?" it may be asked;—"much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." The great object of which oracles, was to develope the Divine *character*, his *will*, and *conduct*, towards his creature man. His *character*, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God, is one Lord." His *will*, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." His *conduct*, "I will have mercy on

whom I will have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." "The Lord, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; and who will, by no means clear the guilty." The object of the divine oracles, as committed to the Jews, was also to show man his own real character, situation, and relationship to God, as a subject of his moral government, and a daring and ruined transgressor of his law. "The law entered that the offence might abound." Rom. v. 20. "That sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful." Rom. vii. 13. A farther object of the divine oracles, as thus delivered, was to display before fallen and ruined men, the exercise of divine compassion in *devising*, *executing*, and *revealing* a way, in and through which, the election of grace, lost in Adam and in themselves; but chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and in him blessed with all spiritual blessing. To show, I say, how these apostates, "children of wrath even as others," might be delivered from going down into the pit, and be brought back to that God from whom they had deeply revolted, that they might taste and enjoy those blessings treasured up for them in Christ Jesus, and worship and serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness. In farther tracing the privileges of God's ancient people the Jews, the apostle observes, that "to them also pertaineth the adoption." As a nation, distinct from all other nations, though the fewest of all people, and a stiff-necked and perverse people, yet the Lord was pleased to adopt them to be a people to his name, the repositories of his oracles and ordinances, as he further notices, "and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." These all, at that day, pertained to, and were bestowed on that favoured people; for these great and all interesting favours had not then been bestowed on any others, nor were

they, until the middle wall of partition was broken down, when the seed came, to whom all the service and ceremonies then in use pointed; of whom, in whom, and to whom, the promises were made. In farther unfolding the advantages that the Israelites had, above all people that dwelt on the face of the earth, he speaks thus: "Whose are the Father's." This was no small privilege, to be the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the eminent and godly that succeeded them; very many favours accrued to the Israelites on that account. But the dignity and importance of their privileges is greatly enhanced in the following clause: "Of whom, *as concerning the flesh*, Christ came." That was the climax of their honor and happiness; but it must here be particularly noticed, and always remembered, that the Jewish Fathers had no claim to the high and distinguishing honor of being the progenitors of Christ, farther than regarded his human nature, for thus it reads: "Of whom, *as concerning the flesh*, Christ came." Observe these striking, distribute and distinguishing terms: "*As concerning the flesh.*" Terms that are evidently designed to mark an important distinction between his HUMAN and DIVINE nature, between David's Son and David's Lord." "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now if David in spirit called him Lord, how is he then his Son?" No man can answer the question, but as the words before us furnish an answer.—"As concerning the flesh," or as respects the flesh, in that sense, Christ came of the Fathers of the Jewish nation. In that sense, and that only, he was the seed of Abraham, the son of David, "his righteous branch;" but he was David's Lord also, the root as well as the offspring of David. "But be astonished, O heavens, and wonder, O earth; because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, *he* also himself likewise took part of the same." O wonderful love! "the word was made

flesh and dwelt among us." "The wisdom of God in a mystery," the greatest of all mysteries, the mystery of godliness; "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness;" but what is that mystery which overwhelms with its magnitude and grandeur, the apostolic mind, and challenges, as it were, the language of inspiration to unfold it? it was this:— "*God* was manifest in the flesh." God, as manifest in the flesh, was "justified in the spirit." "God was seen of angels." O, wonderful sight! they indeed "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" and not only did they see him, but they worshipped him agreeably to the mandate of heaven, "Let all the angels of God worship him." "God, as manifest in the flesh, was preached unto the Gentiles;" yes, verily, he that was preached unto the Gentiles, and in whom the Gentiles are encouraged to trust, *was God.* And faith came by hearing, for God incarnate, who *was* preached, and blessed be God, *is still* preached unto the Gentiles, was "believed on in the world:" and when he had made an end of sin, finished transgression, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, and triumphed over death and the grave. Then, as a great conqueror, "the Lord of Hosts, mighty in battle," he gloriously ascended, leading captivity captive, and was "received up into glory." Thus He, "who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and (afterwards) declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness," according to, or as it respects his divine nature, "by the resurrection from the dead." This glorious and blessed Redeemer did thus, by his taking flesh, and living and dying, "the just for the unjust;" he did, I say, "destroy death and him that had the power of death, that is the devil." Rich grace and sovereign compassion towards the children. "Made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might

redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons." A virgin conceives and bears a son. "Of whom as *concerning the flesh*, Christ came." And although it is a vexation to his enemies to understand the report, yet he is indisputably "over all, *God* blessed for ever, Amen." Thus we are brought to the all important subject to be illustrated and established in this essay: or in other words, to contemplate Christ Jesus the Lord, in all the full orbed splendour of uncreated majesty, as "over all God blessed for ever. Amen." I am well aware of the appalling magnitude of the subject, of the arduous nature of the undertaking; but while I painfully feel my own insufficiency, I feel an equal conviction, that *no man* is sufficient for these things of himself, so that, if human sufficiency is to be waited for, the work of the Lord, in every instance, may go undone, and the adversaries of truth be suffered to triumph unmolested; they on every subject, and especially on the subject of this essay, feel their sufficiency to oppose truth and defame him, who is the "true God and eternal life." Shall then a champion for truth, however humble, who knows where his great strength lieth, be discouraged in pleading the cause of that God and of his truth, who "ordaineth strength in the mouth of babes to perfect praise, and to still the enemy and the avenger?" No. Humbly trusting then, that the good spirit of God, the spirit of wisdom, and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ," may be pleased graciously and suitably to help my infirmities, I have attempted this essay, hoping that something may be said honorable to his great and adorable name, and what he will deign to bless for his own praise, his people's good, and in some degree stopping the mouths of gainsayers; who labour indefatigably to degrade the high and lofty One, our Redeemer, to a creature.—Vain attempt. He is "Lord of all—over all, God blessed for ever.—Amen."

It must be observed and ever borne in mind, that this subject is one especially of revelation. Philosophy and purplind human reason know nothing of it; their vulture eyes cannot see it. "To the law and to the testimony" then; and oh, alas! that even revelation itself is sealed to the proud sceptic. God has in awful sovereignty and just judgment, hid these things from the wise and prudent, the self-sufficient scorner. But still, it is to the lively oracles of God, divested of the prejudices of science, falsely so called, that we ought to come, and must come, if we would "know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

To these oracles, that only source of correct information on a subject so sublime and interesting, I now appeal, and *from* them there can be no appeal; this must be admitted a first principle in theology. The scriptures, and they only, are the safe, sufficient, and authorized judges on all divine subjects.

The Catholics may drag their deluded proselytes to their traditions, their councils, their synods, their popes, and church decisions.—The Unitarians of various names, may also lead their blinded followers by their strong reasons (so called) against the King of Jacob, the King of Zion.

The Legalist of every name, may also lead their votaries (if God permit) by their supposed fitness of things; but it is the Christian's duty and privilege to turn from all such expedients, such refuges of lies, with disdain, and make his appeal to the law and to the testimony, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, and decidedly conclude, if they speak not according to these it is because there is no light in them. "What saith the scripture?" is a proper enquiry on every spiritual subject; because the light that is in us, as fallen sinners, is darkness; and while men continue in a state of nature, "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their minds," that darkness remains, and especially on a subject of

so great and acknowledged a mystery.—I will therefore, as proposed, make an appeal to the true sayings of God, in order to prove from them the all interesting truth under consideration; namely, that Christ is "over all God blessed for ever. Amen." And this I shall attempt by shewing that the scriptures of truth ascribe to Christ the possession of divine perfections, attributes of eternal majesty; and that the correctness of such ascriptions is fully substantiated by his works.

This I presume will be acknowledged a fair and conclusive way of bringing forward the subject which is now to be illustrated and established, that it is a fair and proper way of handling this matter, will appear from the following considerations. If we contemplate a being, and find that it possesses powers and performs works proper (exclusively so) to any particular grade of beings, we possess conclusive evidence, that such a being belongs to that particular grade. So, when we contemplate, in the light of divine truth, the glorious Redeemer of God's elect, as he stands pre-eminently glorious in, and the life of, the sacred page; and find him possessed of, and gloriously displaying the full blaze of the incommunicable perfections, of infinite uncreated majesty, what is it short of demonstration, that he is "over all God blessed forever. Amen!" and does it not furnish us a full warrant to encourage the feeble spouse of Christ, by telling her that her beloved, on whom she leans, is—what? —a creature only!—No, sirs, God forbid!—but by telling her, in the language of inspiration, that "her *Maker* is her husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name." Isa. liv. 5. O glorious and blessed truth, "happy are the people whose God is the Lord." Let the Arian and Socinian, with all their blinded adherents, talk of a creature Saviour—deny the true nature, value and validity of his atonement—and, in their worldly wisdom, scorn the humbling truths of the gospel—boast of their free will, and go about to establish their own righteousness, until deceiver and deceived reap the

fruit of their rebellion. But let the church, the Lamb's wife, cleave to the Lord that bought her, and say in faith "my Lord and my God." View him as the great "I AM, the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty, travelling in the greatness of his strength, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."

In farther prosecuting this subject, I have to shew from the Word, that Jesus our Saviour, the Saviour of them who are ready to perish, possesses divine and incommunicable perfections, so that men ought to honor him even as they honor the Father. Those divine perfections, which will be selected as sufficient for the present occasion, and as embracing the subject matter of this essay, are the following, namely, *Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence* and *Eternity.*

That the word of God ascribes omnipotence to the Lamb that was slain, cannot well be doubted by those who humbly read the 8th verse of the first chapter of Revelations, and compare it with the 11th and 13th: the 8th verse read thus: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the *Almighty.*" And if a doubt could for a moment exist as to who is the speaker, compare this language with what we have in the 11th verse. The beloved John, to whom the Revelation was given, heard a great voice behind him "saying, I am *Alpha* and *Omega,* the *first* and the *last;*" and in the 13th verse, being turned to see who spoke the great and gracious words that saluted his ears, he saw "seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man;" this is the glorious speaker in the 8th verse, the Mediator of the New Covenant, "he that liveth and was dead, 18." who affirms in the 17th verse, that he is "the first and the last." The 8th verse of the 2d chapter, the 6th of the 21st, the 13th of the 22d, compared with the 16th, all speak the same language, and unfold and support the same truth. Is it to be believed

by any taught of God, with his Bible in his hand and its truths in his heart, that an absolute jealous God, who says he will not give his glory to another, is the speaker in the 8th of the first chapter, and that a mere creature is the speaker in the 11th verse, and in all the before cited passages, setting up the same claims that are urged in the 8th, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." It thus appears fully evident, the speaker in each case is one and the same, even him who declares himself to be "*the Almighty.*" And (as James says) to this agree the words of the prophet, Isa. ix. 6. "To us a child is born, to us a son is given, the government shall be on his shoulders, and his name shall be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*"

Has the spirit of prophesy misnamed the Saviour of sinners? no, verily, God (the Holy Ghost) is a God of truth, and Christ is designated "the Mighty God," because he is "the Mighty God, the Almighty." He shall be called "the Mighty God" by the command of heaven, not by mistaken men, as the Unitarian would insinuate; no, verily, and the believer in Jesus can say to his heart's joy, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." This is the language of faith and of truth. But who, I would ask, is keeper of Israel but the Mighty God, he "who fainteth not, neither is weary, whose understanding is unsearchable." This was he to whom the great apostle committed his soul, in well doing, as into the hands of a faithful Creator; and in thus committing his soul to the keeping of Christ, he did nothing less or more, than obey the divine injunction and embrace the divine encouragement, namely, "Trust in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, he giveth power to the faint, and to those who have no might he increaseth strength."

If it be possible to question the correctness of the foregoing statements, as applicable to, and proofs of the omnipotence of him who is able to save to the uttermost, we may say in his language, who spoke as man never spoke, that if his words (and the words of his prophets and apostles) are not to be believed as vouchers for his omnipotence, "*believe his works.*" What saith the scripture? "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Yes "the world was made by him, though the world knew him not." Thus speaks the beloved apostle John, chap. i. 3 and 10. "The world was *created* by him." Thus speaks the apostle and teacher of the Gentiles in truth and verity, Col. i. 16, 17. "By him were all things *created* that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were *created* by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." And in Heb. i. 3. we have this all important declaration touching him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," "*Upholding all things by the word of his power.*" Do not these works, ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ, in language so explicit, so strong, so unequivocal, namely, the creating the world and all things in heaven and earth; governing the world; upholding the world, even all things; and that by his word, his powerful word, the word of his power. Do not, I say, these works of omnipotence prove the doer of them beyond controversy, to be "Almighty God, over all God blessed for ever. Amen." Of whatever character the works of men are, we readily accede to them the possession of a correspondent quality, whether of wisdom, or power, or goodness, or genius, or philanthrophy, or patriotism, or of whatever description they may be: so if we see the Redeemer performing the works of omnipotence, what is it but proof positive, that he possesses that attri-

bute, that incommunicable attribute of infinite majesty. Can any that fear God doubt the important fact? if it be yet possible, then I would ask this all important question, Who is the creator, governor, upholder, and judge of the world? Is not this answer obvious and unavoidable, "*Almighty God.*" Are not the works of creation vouchers for the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator? Rom. i. 20." But Jesus Christ is the creator, governor, upholder, and judge of the world, as has been made fully evident; therefore Jesus Christ is "Almighty God." The premises are self-evident—the conclusion is indisputable.

It is hoped that what has been advanced will be judged to be (as it really is) amply sufficient to establish the first position laid down, namely, that as a proof of Christ's true and proper divinity, he possesses and exercises the incommunicable attribute of *omnipotence.*

I am next to show, from the testimony of the divine oracles, that the adorable, glorious and blessed Redeemer of the election of grace, is "Omniscient God;" or, in other words, that he not only possesses infinite power, but that he also possesses "infinite wisdom," that he is "the only wise God, and our Saviour." If to have an intimate and perfect acquaintance with the human heart be any proof of omniscience or infinite wisdom, our high priest, whose lips keep knowledge, gave ample proof of possessing that intimacy. How oft, in the days of his flesh, did he make it appear, that "he needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." His disciples often found it so when they thought to conceal their vain glorious reasonings from him. Simon, the Pharisee found it, when he was indulging thoughts to the prejudice of his exalted guest, because he seemed disposed to notice, with compassion, a poor polluted, but mourning sinner, at his feet—and the proud Pharisees, who sought to entangle him in his speech, found it, when he thus rebuked them, "I know you,

that you have not the love of God in you"—and a still more decisive proof that the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, is the omniscient God, we have in Rev. ii. 23, compared with Ps. vii. 9, Jer. xi. 20, and particularly xvii. 10. In the 9th verse of this 17th chapter, the question is asked: Who can know the heart of man, which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked? The answer to this highly important question is immediately given by him who only could give it; namely, the omniscient Jehovah—"I the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways." The great Jehovah here claims the exclusive power and prerogative of searching the heart—"I, the Lord, do it"—none else could do it, but that God to whom all things are open and naked; even him with whom we have to do, before whose all pervading eyes hell is without a covering, and from whom none can hide himself.—Now let us turn to Rev. ii. 23, and observe attentively the close and striking affinity between the language of Jehovah, Jer. xvii. 10, and that Rev. ii. 23, where the Son of God thus speaks:—"All the churches shall know that I AM HE which searches the reins and the heart; and I will give to every one of you according to your works." Can the speaker of these words be less than the omniscient God? Can or dare a creature, however exalted, assume to himself the prerogative that Jehovah claims—to search the heart; and still further, to award to men according to their deeds? No, certainly not: and as it would be the height of blasphemy and presumption in any creature thus to pretend, so it is a proof of the most consummate ignorance, blindness and perversity, on theological subjects, to attribute such acts to a creature.

It is most certainly the proper and exclusive act of God, according to Jer. xxv. 14, where the Lord God of Israel speaks thus—"I will recompense them according to their deeds and according to the work of their hands:" and in Ro. ii. 6, it is declared of God that

"he will render to every man according to his deeds." Thus it appears evident that to search the heart and to punish evil is the act of the omnipotent and omniscient God; and it is equally evident that these godlike acts are performed by Jesus Christ: therefore Jesus Christ is indisputably the omnipotent and the omniscient God; and as he declared, in the before cited passage, Rev. ii. 23, that all the churches should know that it was he that searched the reins and the heart, and gave to every man according to his works—so all the churches do know it: that is to say, all the churches of the saints know it—But there are, it is true, many assemblies, who call themselves churches, who do not know it—will not acknowledge it—but pertinaciously deny it: but then we must not recognise such as the churches of Christ, for all his churches are to know it, and what they know in their hearts they confess with their mouths; and on their happy knowledge of the all important fact is founded their encouragement to call upon his name, convinced that, as the omniscient God, he knoweth what they need, understandeth their thoughts afar off, and even answereth their groanings that cannot be uttered. Happy, thrice happy, are the men who, under such a conviction of, and faith in his sufficiency, "call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours."—1 Cor. i. 2.

What has been said on this head might well be admitted sufficient to prove the omniscience of Christ, without taking into the account that he manages and directs all things in the world and in the church, in all ages and all places; and finally, will judge that world when the mystery of God is finished, when he shall have accomplished the number of his elect, and when his infinite power shall have raised the dead, which no being but the infinitely wise God could do. I ask of whom is it said that "in wisdom he hath made them all," even all the works of creation? Must not this question receive the following answer? "*The*

Omniscient God." Again: who governs the world, and all things in it, and directs the way of his people and his servants, and all their concerns of body and soul, in every point of view? The answer to this interrogatory must also be—"*The Omniscient God.*" Farther I ask—who *now* searcheth, with infallible precision, the deceitful hearts of men; and who will, finally, in judgment, award to every man according to his deeds? The answer is again evident—*The Omniscient God.* Yes, verily, God is judge himself: but Jesus Christ our Lord and our God, hath done, doth do and will do all these divine acts, as hath been fully shewn—therefore the unavoidable inference is, that Jesus Christ *is omniscient*, the omniscient God, "over all God blessed forever—*Amen.*"

Having said thus much, which I judge fully sufficient to prove the omnipotence and omniscience of Christ, I shall next endeavor to shew, and I hope to be enabled fully to shew, by the authority of those scriptures that cannot be broken, that the glorious being, in whom the believing Gentiles trust, is the "*Omnipresent God*"—and that he is so is evident, if the incorruptible word of God is judge, which, among many other honorable testimonies, bear witness, Col. ii. 9, that "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily:" and in the 8th verse, the apostle (who was a scribe well instructed into the kingdom of Christ,) admonishes believers to "beware lest any man spoil them, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ—From this it should seem, that men of corrupt minds not only then withstood the truth, but that wise men after the flesh, in after days, would, through philosophy and vain deceit, strive to pervert the right ways of the Lord. But to return from this partial digression, to the subject of this section, which is to shew that Christ is an omnipresent God. If he did not possess the incommunicable perfection of omnipresence, how could it be said, with

truth, that "the fulness of the godhead dwelt in him bodily," or substantially; and if he is not omnipresent, it may with reverence be said, that his own words are not worthy of credit; for in his conversation with Nicodemus, John iii. 16, he declares that he was in heaven while conversing with him on earth. "No man hath ascended *up* to heaven, but he that came *down* from heaven, even the Son of Man which *is in heaven*." Can words be more explicit and full, to prove the omnipresence of the Son of God? He was *on* earth and *in* heaven. Is this any thing short of saying, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" Such privilege (says Milton) hath omnipresence "to go, yet stay"—to come down from heaven, and still to be in heaven. Who but the Lord from heaven, who is the faithful and true witness, could with truth speak thus? Verily none. But "the word who was with God, and who is God," thought it no robbery to be (in this respect) equal; that is to claim equality with God—and for this all important justificatory reason, "he is over all God blessed forever. Amen." Will the Arian, the Socinian, the Unitarians, as they are pleased to call themselves—will they, I ask, say Amen, to so great, so glorious a truth? No, certainly not—but labor incessantly to obscure and even blot it out, if it were possible; while his people, who know his name, (his character) and put their trust in him, who by him have been redeemed from all evil, add their Amen, with the whole heart, and hail him as universal Lord, worthy of all blessing and praise, to whom every knee shall bow, and "the end of their conversation in Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever." Again—does not the Saviour assert his omnipresence and encourage the confidence of his servants in him, in *all places* and at *all times*, when he says, "Lo, I am with you *always*, to the end of the world. Can any one, but that divine being, who is every where present, use such language? No, surely not, except he meant to deceive, and that be far from

the faithful and true witness, who was full of grace and *truth*, and by whom grace and *truth* came, but not falsehood—no guile was found in his mouth.—How would a plain godly man understand these gracious words that dropt from the lips of his Lord, especially when his heart was bowed down with trouble, and he was enabled to mix faith with them?—Would he not so understand them as to induce him to say, "heaviness in my heart hath long made it stoop, but thy good word, my Lord and my God, maketh it glad." Prov. xii. 25—Here is an experimental use and enjoyment of a most important truth—for although the Unitarians and carnal men of every name, may call it enthusiasm, the believer in whose heart Christ is formed the hope of glory, knows in whom he has believed, enjoys fellowship with him, and is persuaded that he is able to keep him by his power—to supply all his needs out of his fulness—and, at last, to present him faultless before his throne—because he is well assured that the fulness of the *godhead* dwells in *him bodily*. Who but that strong God—the omnipotent God, could give power to the faint; and to those who have no might, increase strength? So speak to his servants and tell them his strength should be perfected in their weakness, as to enable them to "glory most gladly in their infirmities, that the *power* of *Christ* might rest upon them."—2 Cor. xii. 9.

Who but an all-wise God can search his people's hearts, know all their wants, weaknesses and foes, and suit his operations thereto? And who but a God every where present, can comfort the souls of his people, in all the tribulation they endure, and be to them a sun and shield in every part of the world, and in every age, and under every possible circumstance? Most certainly, no one, but an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God, could do these things. But all these doth the Redeemer of lost men, as has been amply made manifest, by which he is proved omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, by the express testimo-

ny of the word of God, and by the works he *hath* performed, is now performing, and will hereafter perform. Seeing, then, that these things are so, that Christ is possessed of such incommunicable perfections, and doth such works as declare and prove his eternal power and godhead, is it not proper to say, "The God of the whole earth shall he be called," Isa. liv. 5, who is, in the words I am attempting to illustrate, "over all God blessed forever. Amen." Be encouraged then, oh! feeble of the flock, to believe that he who said, "because I live, you shall live also," is able to make good his words, so that a feeble saint shall win the day, though death and hell obstruct the way; and that he is able to do this because "thy *Maker* is thy *husband*, the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel, "the God of the whole earth shall he be called."

Lastly I am to shew from the sacred volume of inspiration, that this prince of the kings of the earth, by whom kings reign, this King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, is "the *eternal* God;" that he inhabits or is possessed of eternity, or eternal existence, as an incommunicable perfection of godhead. If we view the subject retrospectively we find him often declaring, "*I am* the *first*"—"*I am* he that *was*"—before Abram *was I am*"—and John, the Baptist, bears this testimony—"He was before me"—John i. 15. These terms, and several others of similar import, are used to declare the eternity of God our Saviour, in a retrospective point of view. If we look at the subject prospectively, we find the Son of God, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, declaring "I am the last," "the Omega," "he that is and is to come"—so that if we make the scriptures the man of our counsel, and attempt not to be wise above what is written, if we cease to lean to our own understanding, and are content to be fools that we may be wise, there will be no difficulty in our being brought to the conclusion of the apostle, and expressing our thoughts on this lofty

subject in his language—"Jesus Christ the same *yesterday, to-day* and *forever.*" O glorious truth; a Saviour eternal and unchangeable; the same *yesterday, to-day* and *forever*—"without variableness or shadow of turning." Well might he say, "Look unto me all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for *I am God*, and none else."

This is our "Immanuel, *God* with us, who is over all, God blessed for ever. *Amen.*"—"Trust in him then at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him;" and be assured that such worship and such trust is not a departing from the living God and trusting in man, for which men are cursed; but it is a trusting in the strength of Israel, who is not a man merely, that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should change.—His name shall be called "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, or Father of *Eternity*, the Prince of Peace." And if God the Father commanded the angelic host to worship him, while here in the flesh, saying "Let *all* the angels of God worship *him*;" may we not now with the strictest propriety, exhort the household of faith to follow the example of the cloud of witnesses gone before, in the language of holy writ, "He is thy *Lord*, and *worship* thou *him.*" "Let prayer be made for him continually, (that is for the prosperity of his cause) and daily let him be praised. Speak good of his name, and talk of all his *wondrous works.*" And according to the mandate of heaven, "honour the Son even as you honour the Father." And though many are so blinded by the god of this world, that they cannot see a truth so bright; yet let it be your practice, as it is your privilege who trust in his name to say, "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." "This (Jesus Christ who gave us the understanding to know him) is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John, v. 20. Who but the true

God could thus enlighten the benighted mind of man, that he should know Him, whom to know is eternal life? Let then the children of God declare, to the honor of their Redeemer, that their fellowship is with the Son as well as with the Father, 1 John i. 3. and that the fellowship they intend is not that which subsists between saints, but the fellowship of a believing man with a gracious God, in the enjoyment of which his wants are poured into the bosom of a friend that loveth at all times, and who is ever able and ready to supply him out of his own fullness—and let it be observed, this practice is perfectly consonant with the example of ancient believers, who called upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours. Peace be on all such, even on the whole Israel of God.

Shall then the friends of Christ, with all these proofs, and a thousand more, of the true divinity of God our Redeemer—with all these decisive evidences that "he is over all God blessed forever"—shall they, I say, hesitate to add their hearty and believing Amen—and dare to derogate from his honor, or suffer others so to do, without an effort to stop the mouths of gainsayers, because in infinite commiseration of our wretchedness, he displayed the riches of his grace in becoming poor, though rich—in making himself of no reputation, (though equal with God—in being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and taking upon himself the form (or character) of a servant, (though "Lord of all,") that being found in fashion as a man he might humble himself and become obedient (though a son) even unto death—the death of the cross? No, surely not—It would be the height of ingratitude and wickedness. Nor will the believer in Christ dare refuse him the honor due to his adorable name; because, in order to be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for iniquity, he condescended to be made like unto his brethren! God forbid. So far from it,

these things inspire their confidence and call forth their adoration, gratitude and love, in language like this: "Worthy is the Lamb that was *slain* to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing"—and for this important reason: "that in being slain he redeemed us (say they) to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." This is the sentiment that prevails in the grateful bosom of every believer in our Lord Christ; and none but his enemies, who are shut up in unbelief, will think of making his condescension a justifiable pretext to disparage, degrade and dishonor him.

Whenever the invincible grace and power of God turns the heart of a sinner from disobedience to the wisdom of the just, he is brought to renounce his own wisdom and receive the word of truth from his mouth, who is a priest after the power of an endless life—the Lord of life and glory—whom, if any man love not, let him be anathema, maranatha, saith the apostle.

"Thou shalt love *the Lord thy God*, and him only shalt thou serve"—and if any man serve not and love not the Lord Christ, he is an enemy to all righteousness—but he that does love and serve him, acts in perfect conformity to the first and greatest command—and if such love and obedience rendered to Christ was not in conformity to that command it would be a crime; for the command runs thus: "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God, and *him* ONLY shalt thou serve." He then who loves and serves Christ, loves and serves the *Lord his God*—so Thomas judged, when in faith he thus addressed his risen Saviour:—"*My Lord and my God.*"

Thus it appears that, though we cannot by searching find out the Almighty to perfection, yet if we are enabled to search for biblical knowledge as for hid treasure, it will appear that the scriptures of truth are replete with testimony upon testimony, presented in a great variety of forms, to prove that he, who was

from above, and above all, who tabernacled among us, as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, is "the *Lord* our *Righteousness;* the *true* God and Eternal Life; the Almighty God; the all-wise God; the every where present God; the Eternal God; over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

To conclude, he that hath the Son as the object of his trust, as the object of his love, the object of his worship, reverence and obedience; he that thus hath the Son dwelling in his heart by faith, as his all and in all, hath life; and he that hath not the Son thus considered, hath not life.

The Unitarians' plea for the exercise of candour and charity towards them, cannot be heard; they have no just, no admissible claim for peace; it would be dealing deceitfully in the covenant and sinning against the generation of God's children to grant it, in the sense they plead for it, while their rebellion against the Lord and his anointed is so flagrant, in denying the true divinity of his person, the necessity, nature, and validity of his atonement, in expiating sin by bearing it in his own body on the tree, and thus satisfying divine justice; and also by their denying the imputation of his active obedience, his mediatorial righteousness, to them that believe, to constitute them righteous. Rom. v. 19. In going about to establish their own righteousness, the supposed dignity and rectitude of human nature, and freedom of the human will, and sufficiency of human power in things pertaining to salvation—While (I say) their departure from and opposition to truth, and him who is the essential truth, is so flagrant, their plea for candor, charity and peace cannot be heard—for if this foundation were removed, what could the righteous do?—other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. He is such a foundation as the believer *needs, approves* and *loves*—not a sandy one, but a rock—a living and life giving stone—a rock on which his church is built. 'Tis

true he is a rock of offence, and disallowed by those who stumble at the word, *being disobedient*—rebels against the person and government of Zion's King. Such would do well to remember that he hath said, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever *it* shall fall, it shall grind them to powder."

Christ then is a rock of offence to the wicked of every name; but to the godly of every name, he is "a sure foundation, a living and life giving rock;" and every believer may add, "*To* whom I have come, being drawn by the Father, by whom I have been enlivened; *On* whom I am built through the Spirit, who is to me precious; and respecting whom I can say in faith, "The Lord *liveth*, and blessed be my *rock;* and let the God of my salvation be exalted. Psa. xviii. 46. "And because he lives I shall live also."

To close this essay, I ask in the language of scripture, Psa. xviii. 31. "*Who* is God save the Lord? or *who* is a *rock* save our God?" the answer must be in the negative, NONE, no one is a rock save our God: but Jesus Christ is a *rock*. Then, and therefore, Jesus Christ ("the brightness of the Father's glory") "*is our God,*" "over all, *God* blessed throughout all ages. *Amen.*" Even *so;* "and blessed be his Holy Name" for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

This is the God the Christian's heart adores,
In whom he trusts, to whom his prayer he pours;
Whose strength in weakness felt is perfect made,
Whose grace in straits affords sufficient aid,
Whose love preserv'd him e'er he did him call,
Whose arms uphold him when he else would fall.
From darkness into light his soul he brought,
And with an hand that's strong he hath him taught
To know himself as lost—and Christ, his God,
Who guides and feeds him by and with his rod—
That rod (his word) which is from Zion sent,
Through which, when own'd of God, lost men repent.

And then by faith, (which doth by hearing come,)
They leave (through sense of need) their native home.
And flee to Christ, their rock and hiding place,
And taste his dying love and saving grace.
Such gladly own him as the "Lord of all,"
And like the saints of old upon him call,
As on a "*potent*," "*wise*" and "*present*" friend,
"*Eternally the same*"—he knows no end.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

UNALTERABLE LOVE OF GOD,

AS ILLUSTRATED IN

BEARING WITH, FEELING FOR, AND HEALING

BACKSLIDERS.

Yet I am the Lord thy God, from the Land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but me, for there is no Saviour beside me.—Hosea xiii. 4.

WHOEVER is taught of God to know himself as a lost sinner, totally depraved and without strength, and to know also Christ crucified as the all sufficient Saviour of them who are (sensibly) ready to perish, and who studies the sacred scriptures under the teaching of the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, such a one will be led to discover, to his great comfort, many very gracious and interesting displays of triumphant grace and sovereign compassion, not only towards the chief of sinners in their first conversion, in plucking them as brands from the everlasting burnings; but, if possible, more eminently triumphant and sovereign, in the healing of the worst and most perverse of backsliders, and in all the gracious steps

tending to that happy, God honoring, and soul saving issue, by which the Lord God, merciful and gracious, is so supereminently distinguished from, and exalted infinite heights above man! "I will not return to destroy Ephraim; *for* I *am* God and *not* man!" Hosea xi. 9.

In the preceding part of the chapter from whence I have selected my motto, (as in very many parts of God's gracious word) we have a painful narrative of the great, persevering and increasing wickedness, of the professed people of God of that day; they had forsaken the fountain of living waters, they had joined themselves to Idols, and in *that* they sinned more and more! and though God in fatherly displeasure chastised them with the rod of men, visiting their sins with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes, Psa. lix. 32. though he made them as the morning cloud and early dew, as the chaff driven with the whirlwind, and as smoke out of the chimney; yet his unalterable loving kindness never failed! he knew infallibly what was best calculated to secure the honor of his own government, and commend most illustriously the riches of his unsearchable love in Christ! He would not therefore give the offenders up to that judgment they so richly deserved, and of which his enemies had so often been made the monuments. Hear his own most gracious soliloquy on the subject. "How shall I give thee *up* Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboam? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together!" Read Hosea xi. from the 7th verse to the end, and it will evidently appear, that these and other most gracious words are spoken with reference to a people *bent* to backslide, none of whom would exalt the Most High, but compassed him about with lies and deceit; yet the Lord our God is Jehovah and changeth *not!* and therefore his refractory and offending family are not consumed as they deserve! O the riches of divine

grace, forbearance and mercy! It is true, that for peace the froward have great bitterness, for in very faithfulness doth he afflict; but still in love to their souls, in Christ, and for his sake, he casts all their sins behind his back into the depths of the sea. The backslider in heart is indeed filled with his own ways, to his grief, wounding and shame; but though he has shamefully forgotten God, yet that God of patience, against whom he hath so foully and ungratefully sinned, and by whom he hath set so light, "doth earnestly remember him still;" and although the Lord speak against him and acts against him, (for "with the froward God will shew himself froward,") "yet he will surely have mercy upon him," when he has suitably chastised and humbled him. *He* hath said it, whose word stands firmer than heaven and earth, one jot or tittle of which can never fall to the ground "What shall we then say to these things?" Nothing better can be said than what the apostle of the Gentiles was instructed to say, namely: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"—and that God is for (or on the side of) poor mourners in Zion, who, through grace, have believed on his Son, cannot be doubted; to plead their cause, fight their battles, "deliver them from him that is stranger than they, and make them more than conquerors, through him that hath loved them!"

The captain of our salvation (as Pharoah said) "fighteth for Israel against the Egyptians." Yet still worse foes than the ancient Egyptians are against us. Yes, verily, the world, the flesh and the devil are in battle array against the household of faith, the flock of Christ, and especially against the unhappy wanderers from his fold; but still the good shepherd's care ceaseth not, for as sure as David slew a lion and a bear which committed depredations on his flock which was his charge, so sure, and more effectually, will the good shepherd Christ Jesus, go into the wilderness and seek "that lost sheep that is driven away

until he find it;" nor will he set dogs to worry it; but as he knows how to "have compassion on the ignorant and those who are out of the way, he will lay it on his shoulders, or in his bosom, and bring it back!" If it is diseased "he will heal that which is sick," as well as "restore that which was driven away!" And although the restored wanderer should be so disfigured by disease, and its fleecy robe (which should be always white) so defiled with the filth, and torn by the brambles of the wilderness, yea, though some of its bones should be so broken by falls into pits, (for indeed "it is a land of pits and snares,") although, I say, all these evils should have combined so to disfigure the poor culprit, that the sheep who had been safely kept, and well fed, and clean clothed, should hardly be able to know, and proudly disdain to own (as one of them) a creature so disfigured and defiled, yet Christ, the chief shepherd, seeth not as the sheep see; they look upon the outward appearance, he looketh upon the heart—the heart which himself hath prepared! He heareth the wanderer bemoaning himself, which is no other than the answer or echo of the tongue, corresponding with the prepared state of the heart, made soft, humble and contrite, and he whose ear is never heavy, well understandeth the sighing of the needy! Perhaps the sheep may but ill understand the bleating of the wounded and diseased, which in the ear of a gracious God, and at the footstool of his mercy, is poured out thus: "I have no rest in my bones because of my foolishness; my wounds stink and are corrupt; my loins are filled with a loathsome disease; my sore runneth in the night and ceaseth not; I abhor myself in dust and ashes. Against thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." "O heal my backslidings, forgive my sins, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice!"

The favoured and preserved sheep of the flock, I have said, and I know I have said truly, do but ill

understand, and I may add, they less credit the sincerity of such self loathing lamentations; and though the poor unhappy subject of them "wets his couch with tears," yet they suspect they are but crocodile tears: so that it sometimes happens (and it is, and ever will remain for a lamentation) that the despised and shunned subject, who would gladly lie down in the fold and partake of their rich pastures and still waters, is again driven to herd with the goats and the swine; and though he cannot be satisfied with their husks nor with their society, and is driven to say "wo is me, for I dwell in Meshek;" yet it rarely happens that he can find an eye that will pity him, or any who are desirous to "strengthen that which remains, by even saying, "brother, be of good cheer!" so that it appears as if "no man cared for his soul." Such is the prevalence of self righteousness; but though men, even good men, act thus reprehensibly, disdainful and negligent, for the want of more self knowledge and more brotherly love, which would teach them to "mourn with those who mourn, and groan being burdened." While men act thus, the ways of a sin-forgiving God transcend them in wisdom and compassion, as the heavens are higher than the earth! for if we attentively consider the tender language and dealings of God towards his backsliding children, we must be constrained to exclaim—"His ways are not as our ways, nor are his thoughts as our thoughts!" No, verily, the unchangeable love of his heart, and the ever-abiding relation between himself and his people, enriches and emblazons the sacred page, so that he who runs may read—Thus he speaks in unchangeable love: "Yet I am the Lord thy God, from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but me, for there is no Saviour beside me." O most gracious, encouraging and supporting words, to him who is stung with self-reproach, the frowns of men, and scorning of those who are at ease!

The relationship is indissoluble." "Yet I am the

Lord thy God," notwithstanding thy many provocations;" "yet" though thou hast forsaken me times without number, though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; "yet," notwithstanding all this and much more, still "I am the Lord *thy* God!" This great and glorious truth writ as with a sun-beam, and writ *in* blood, and *with* blood, even the blood of God's dear Son; this great truth, I say, was most mercifully and happily illustrated in the experience of David—a man who had been most signally favoured of God, and had every thing bestowed on him that heart or flesh could covet; yet he sinned with a high hand and a hardened heart, a "heart hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;" for while his valiant and faithful worthy Uriah, was jeopardizing his life in the high places of the field, and fighting his battles, he (David) conspired against his peace, and stole his wife!—and when his craft and stratagem proved ineffectual to hide his shame, he conspired against his *life*, "and murdered him with the sword of the children of Ammon!" Base outrage of every principle of honor as a soldier, as well as of justice as a man, his iniquity was great—not only adultery, but blood guiltiness was on his head—but base and aggravated as was the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba, *it was not unpardonable!*—but being interested in "that better covenant which is established on better promises, which covenant is well ordered in all things, and sure to all the seed." A prophet was in God's good time, sent to rebuke him for his iniquity, and to be instrumental in the hand of the Spirit, to bring him to a sense of his sin, and to repentance not to be repented of; and this was done by a judicious and appropriate parable, dictated to the prophet no doubt by infinite wisdom; so that the guilty monarch passed judgment on himself, saying, "The man that hath done this shall surely die." The man that could be base and selfish enough to violate every law of God and man, by taking his neighbour's "only lamb which

lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter," to feed a traveller when he had a large flock of his own. Such a man, saith he, that could do this, shall surely die! it is not fit that such a monster of baseness should live! And had this royal delinquent been informed that this neighbour thus robbed of his all, was a good, a faithful, a devoted friend, and actually serving his robber, at the hazard of his life; while this ingrate, like a prowling wolf, was breaking into his unguarded fold and robbing him of his most esteemed earthly blessing! had, I say, this transgressor been informed of these facts, we may fairly presume that his indignation would have increased seven fold; he would have been ready to have used a form of speech at that time common—"God do so to me and more also, if such a man shall live to see the morning light!" But O! how insensible to the horrid turpitude of his *own* crimes, infinitely worse than the *letter* of the parable, of which he supposed some other man to be the transgressor; alas! how ready are many to cast a stone at an offender when not convicted in their own consciences; but let it be observed, a forwardness to condemn others is no proof of innocence, but rather of insensibility and hard-heartedness! It was the case in the accusers of the woman taken in adultery, who appears to have found mercy at the hand of Christ, and it was evidently the case in David! but how must he have felt ashamed and confounded before God and man, when the honest prophet shewed him the application of the parable to his case, thus—"*Thou art the man!*" Thou who hast been so ready to devote to death the unfeeling depredator, *thou art the man* that hast done all that my parable contains and intends. O! how must the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba have rushed upon his mind, with all the aggravating circumstances, the attendant evils of his two capital crimes—*adultery* and *murder!*—however insensible before, he was now made to feel a truth afterwards uttered by his son So-

lomon: "A wounded spirit who can bear." But all conquering grace softened his heart, preserved him from maltreating, and bowed his soul to the severe rebukes of his faithful monitor the prophet, who not only told him he was "*the man*," the guilty rich man, who had cruelly robbed the poor man—but, to enhance his crimes in his own view, he reminds him of all the Lord had done for him in anointing him king over Israel—delivering him from Saul—giving him his house and his wives into his bosom—and then expostulates faithfully with him on the enormity of his crimes—in despising the commandment of the Lord—murdering his faithful servant and soldier Uriah, and defiling his wife. If any crimes could have stopped the current of unchangeable love towards a foul backslider, one might have supposed that these would: their character was extremely heinous, of the highest and foulest turpitude. The circumstances under which they were committed were peculiarly aggravating, and quite destitute of any extenuating ingredients. But, deep dyed as were his crimes, and they were certainly very deep, of a crimson, of a bloody hue, yet love divine, all love excelling, love that is stronger than death, that love of the Father that did not spare his Son, that love of the Son that impelled him to give up himself and pour out his soul unto death, to be numbered with transgressors, and to bear the sin of many—such love is not to be arrested in its operations, in its emanations and out-goings towards the guilty—It must not be!—it cannot be!—where sin did so grossly abound, to the injury of men and the dishonour of God, by giving his enemies so great occasion to blaspheme, *there* did *grace* much more abound to the humbling and restoring the offender—for, let it be observed, that when the prophet had proceeded to shew David the great evils he had committed, the heavy and severe chastisements he had procured to himself, and when the guilty doer, from a heart-felt sense of his extreme vileness, was

brought humbly and honestly to confess the evil of his doings thus: "I have sinned against the Lord." Immediately the prophet delivers his consoling message from that God against whom David had so greatly sinned, even that God who "delights to *multiply* to pardon, and to pass by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage," thus: "The Lord hath *also put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.*" 2 Sam. xii. 13. O what astonishing and gracious words! full of grace, free, rich, triumphant grace, such "soft words break the bone," and sweetly dissolve the heart of stone!—The proud Pharisee may gnash his teeth, but "grace will reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," "who was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Thus did the Lord in rich mercy say to David, and he hath said it to thousands, and will say it to thousands more. "Yet I am the Lord thy God." Though thou hast done evil as thou could, for which I have visited, and will yet visit with a severe rod; "yet I change not—the thoughts of my heart stand fast for a thousand generations—I know the thoughts that I think towards you—thoughts of peace and not of evil;" for "yet (after all) I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt know no God but me"—"I will purge you from your dross and your tin." Neither pleasures, nor honors, nor riches shall be your God. I will bring you to say from the heart—"What have I any more to do with idols." "Thou shalt know *no God* but me," for this most gracious and all important reason: "There is *no Saviour* beside me." What glorious gospel! what soul saving and God honoring truth! That a believing man should say what have I any more to do with idols—or, in the language of Peter, "To whom (else) Lord shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life." This, I say, is in some sense natural, because the sinner has his interest in it; but for the ever blessed God to *resolve*, that an unworthy, ungrateful creature, a

creature bent to backslide, should know no God but himself, that he would chasten him out of every refuge of lies, and not suffer him to settle on his lees finally, because nothing can do him real good, no one save him from real evil but himself; "there is *no Saviour* beside me." O! this is matchless grace!

And while we contemplate this most astonishing, grand, and interesting display and triumph of free, sovereign, immutable and all-conquering grace, and unbounded mercy in Christ to eternal life, towards a man so highly favoured and greatly honored, to be a prophet and a king, and who had so foully and inexcusably transgressed; while, I say, we contemplate this illustration of unchangeable love, it is no unimportant circumstance to consider that the perpetrator of such heinous crimes, contrasted with the possession of such superlative favours, was not in his future life (after brought to repentance) degraded from his high, honorable and important office, either that of king, or more especially that of a prophet; in which as the sweet singer of Israel, he was till his dying day, usefully employed of God, and his labours will continue to be abundantly owned of God, to comfort all that mourn, until the end of time! witness that invaluable poem the 51st psalm, which appears to have been wrote immediately after God had broken his heart for sin, (see the title) in which psalm we have the most earnest pleadings for mercy and all-subduing grace! the most candid and ingenuous confessions of sin and depravity, entreaties for the abiding and renewing influence of the holy Spirit; and in the 12th verse he pleads cogently with his gracious God to restore to him the joys of his salvation, which he had deservedly and painfully lost; but not only did he pray for the renewed enjoyment of such heavenly and inexpressible pleasures, but to shew how much he felt his weakness, and how much he desired to be kept in his future life from every presumptuous sin and from secret faults, he humbly,

but earnestly, entreats to be kept in the way in which he should go; hence he adds to the former petition this most important and equally needful one: "And uphold me with thy free Spirit!" and then observe what he proposes as the result of God's answering these petitions, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways." O how would the proud Pharisee chafe at this, and how would the leaven of pharisaism in good men ferment at a similar declaration and intention now,—*You teach!* they would be ready to exclaim, *you*, who have done so much to dishonor God, grieve the godly, and cause the ungodly to triumph; you presume to exhort men to walk circumspectly, who have walked so loosely yourself; you enforce it on men to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, when you have done so much evil to gratify your own lusts; yes, says the restored penitent, I will teach, I who have done all you accuse me of and much more, I will take shame to myself who am but a dead dog; seeing my life is hid with Christ in God, who "hath put away my sin" and said that *"I shall not die."* I, even I, will teach transgressors *his ways*, even the ways of an infinitely gracious God, in chastening, and restoring backsliding transgressors; and who more fit (I ask) if God see good? I am converted, or reconverted may such a one say, why should not *I* try to strengthen my brethren, as an instrument in his hands, who "strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, and taketh the prey from the mighty!" I also will teach transgressors who are yet in their sins, *the way of life;* I will preach Christ the way, the truth, and the life, in all the dignity and suitability of his person, the perfection and efficacy of his work,—in living *obediently*—in dying *patiently*—in rising victoriously, and in ascending triumphantly, "leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men, even for the *rebellious*, that the Lord God might dwell amongst us." This says the man who hath obtained health and cure! This I will do, grace enabling me;

and though many may despise, and some oppose, it shall in the issue be evident, that God hath chosen the base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, with this important object in view—that no flesh should glory in his presence—but that the excellence and the power may evidently appear to be of God, and not of men!—and these things (namely, the foul deeds of God's own, and the extension of mercy to them, in *restoring* and *employing* them for others good,) are written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the world are come, that we may learn not to be high minded but fear, not to despise but pity, not repulsively to say stand by thyself, but receive them for Christ's sake, as God hath received them. But, before I dismiss this grand illustration and proof of the unalterable love of God, towards the objects of his choice in Christ, I must notice the confidence that this foul offender, but godly mourner, expresses, that his future efforts will be owned of God for great usefulness. Then, when God is pleased to restore to me the joys of his salvation, and will graciously deign to uphold me with his free spirit—"Then will *I* teach transgressors his ways, *and sinners shall be converted unto him!*" This some would judge to be the very climax of arrogance, that a man who had so basely despised the commandment of the Lord, should dare to hope for, and confidently anticipate, such an honorable employ and extensive usefulness, when so many who are so *holy* and so *good*, at least in their own eyes, are unemployed, or, if employed, totally useless. God will have it so, that the first may be last, and the last first—the one "is as a cloud that drops down fatness," his heart being enriched with mercy and truth, while the other "is as a cloud without rain"—and who art thou, O man, that repliest against God, who seeth not as men see, whose ways are unsearchable," and infinitely transcend the ways of men, or David would never have been so usefully employed after he had so base-

ly played the traitor, nor would Peter either, after he had so falsely, so profanely, so ungratefully, so wickedly denied his Lord, ever been employed "to teach and preach Jesus and his unsearchable riches, to comfort the mourners, to stregthen his brethren, to warn the unruly, and comfort the feeble minded"—never, I say, would this have been witnessed, had not God's ways been infinitely above ours, and had he not been determined "to stain the pride of men, and commend the riches of his own sovereign grace, by shewing forth a pattern of all long suffering,"—not in David only, but also in Peter, in whom we see an astonishing proof of the unalterable love of God, which is the subject, the pleasing and profitable subject of this essay!

Peter's conduct appears, to the view of men, but little short in criminality to that of Judas, who went hardened to his own place, while Peter was melted into contrition by a look of divine compassion, and most tenderly dealt with by the merciful High Priest of our profession, who looketh on the heart and exerciseth compassion on those who are (turned by temptation) out of the way. And the man who knows "the plague of his heart," and the baneful influence of Satan's devices, and the snares of the world, will say with gratitude—"Such a High Priest became us"—was indispensably needful for us—everlasting shame and confusion would have been the consequence if we had not had such a High Priest—"a great High Priest—higher than the heavens, who ever liveth to make intercession," consecrated to his priestly office by the oath of God, even that oath which made the Son a Priest forevermore, according to the power of an endless life. This Son, who is king, judge and lawgiver, over his own house the church, not only pardoned his offending servant Peter, but commanded him "to feed his sheep, and his lambs, and strengthen his brethren," as a fruit and proof of his love towards his Lord. John xxi. 15, 16, 17.—and we do not find

that this profusion of unchanging love and divine compassion was ever abused by Peter or his friends; nor does it appear that either friends or foes made his former failings matter of reproach against him, neither does it appear to have been any hinderance to his usefulness, though his labors were principally among the circumcision, a people to whom the nature of his conduct was well known—but it seems that a dog was not suffered to move his tongue against him; so that we have not only another notable instance in the case of Peter, of the unalterable love of God, exemplified in the bearing with, feeling for, and healing of a backslider, but in addition to that we have another striking instance of wonderful condescension in employing a man who had committed such serious offences as an instrument to promote his glory, by spreading his truth and his fame in the world, calling in his elect from the four winds of heaven, and feeding and strengthening the household of faith! O, sirs, look and wonder at this stupendous grace, and be assured, as a matter of great encouragement, that this is not a solitary instance, "for many such things are with him"—and what ought to be the sentiment and language of the godly, while with grateful amazement they are led to contemplate and admire such brilliant displays of unfathomable compassion and divine sovereignty, either in ancient or modern times? but this—"*Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight!*" *Thy will be done!*"

True it is, that the man who is a mouth for God, should be of *good report*; but this cannot be understood as to bear on the whole of his past life, even since he has professed himself a friend of Christ, a lover of truth and of good men. If it were so to be understood, it would have imposed eternal silence on David, on Solomon, on Peter, and on many of the most useful in the church of Christ in modern times. The man who hateth instruction (to speak in the language of scripture) is a wicked man, and ought not

to declare God's statues, or take his covenant in his mouth, but (to set an extreme case) the broken hearted sinner who fell by sin *yesterday*, and is restored by grace *to-day*, may teach transgressors God's ways to-morrow, in hope of the conversion of sinners without any infraction of any law of God! His fall may by others, and will by the subject himself, be deeply and long regretted and lamented, and all the godly ought from the heart to join in this request to God and man—Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the Philistines triumph, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice! yet the writer of this feels fully satisfied that the sentiment above stated is, and the practice would be, *perfectly correct*, notwithstanding the advocates of the doctrine of *expediency* might suggest a different line of conduct, being guided by their own misconception, rather than the word of God! But to return from this digression to the professed subject of this essay, namely, "The unalterable love of God, as illustrated in his bearing with, feeling for, and healing of backsliders;" a doctrine not confined to a few individual insolated cases, but graciously diffused through, and blended with, nay more, constituting a material and necessary part of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God!" We have a most beautiful exemplification of this doctrine, in all its interesting particulars, in Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.—"I have *surely* heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth! Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child?—for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still—therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord!"

The character about whom this gracious language is employed, had foully offended as a backsliding heifer, drawing back from the yoke—but God "saw his ways, and was graciously determined to heal him; but he first chastised him as bullocks are chastised when they refuse to bow the neck to the yoke; and God so accompanied the strokes he inflicted with humbling grace, that self-loathing and bemoaning himself ensued—but had not God given more grace to soften the heart, he would have gone on frowardly in the way of *his* heart; but when grace operated, the stubborn and disobedient heart became contrite, and God kindly notices the fruit of his own grace—"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself!" As the seed deposited by the careful seedsman beneath the earth, when it has received the fertilizing shower and genial influence of the sun, swells, vegetates and bursts the incumbent clod, and as leaven hid by the assiduous housewife in the meal, ferments and transfuseth its influence through the whole mass, so grace, while it operates, subdues refractoriness, and kindly produces every humble, contrite and suitable disposition of the heart, that the subject justifies God and takes shame to himself; so did Peter, so did David, so did Ephraim; men might have questioned the sincerity of his penitential tears, but God acknowledges them, as the fruit of his own grace, thus: "I, who cannot err, I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus;" and this self loathing was accompanied with a deep sense of his helplessness, hence he pleads thus with God: "Turn thou me and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God." From this petition we may learn, that without God we can do nothing. A heart to loath ourselves and bemoan our condition, and power to turn to him who smiteth us, is from God, and the sensible sinner is made to feel it, both in his first awakenings and in all his after delinquencies. "Turn thou me and I shall be turned," says the poor backslidor; and when faith is in exercise he can add: "For

thou art the Lord my God"—thus supporting his plea from the consideration of that blessed, gracious and indissoluble relationship, subsisting between God and himself, or, as the Psalmist words his plea: "I am thine, save me"—a plea that is never finally urged in vain. In the case of Ephraim now under consideration, we find this noble plea was available, God granted him the humble and urgent request of his soul, hence we find, in relating his after experience, he says, "Surely, after that I was turned, I repented;" so did Peter, and wept bitterly too. But when did he thus weep? when the Lord his God looked upon him, and when Peter looked on him whom he had pierced, then he mourned; but no man can mourn after a godly sort; no man can evangellically repent, until divine all-conquering grace has broken and turned his heart; so that every converted sinner, and every restored backslider, will say, "*Surely* after that I was turned I repented;" and when by all these wonderful dealings and teachings of God, he had learned much of his own vileness, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, *of his sin*, and also much of the superaboundings of divine compassion, in restoring him from the error of his ways, we find him in a paroxysm of godly surprise and astonishment at his own baseness, and God's great goodness, smiting on his thigh, as though he would say, *what a wretch* to sin against so much goodness! what a God in Christ, to pardon so much iniquity, trangression and sin! "After I was *instructed* I smote upon my thigh;" but not till he was instructed, he saw nothing, and felt nothing amiss before; but when God had "opened his ear for discipline, and sealed his instruction," then, says he, "I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

Thus is the saved sinner and the restored wanderer overwhelmed with surprise, shame, confusion and self reproach, and sometimes with the reproach of others; but to him who is afflicted, pity should be shewed by

his friends, who ought not to speak to the grief of those whom God has wounded. The world indeed will do it, not because they disapprobate, much less lament his evil deeds, but because he is delivered from them, and says that God is his Father, in Christ.—They look upon him as a kind of double deserter; first from God to them, and now from them to God; and this his last act is, in their estimation, the worst offence—not knowing or considering that "this turning about is from the Lord"—they will therefore reproach him, for "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." But the godly should not reproach the repenting prodigal, because their God and Saviour doth not. "He giveth (and forgiveth) liberally, and upbraideth not."

And now, having contemplated the exercise of the restored wanderer, under all those operations which flow from the unalterable love of God, it is highly important to observe, how a gracious, sin-forgiving, covenant God describes his own feelings on the subject: "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do *earnestly* remember him still—therefore my bowels are trouble for him—I will *surely* have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Be astonished, O heavens, and wonder, O earth, at this developement of the fulness of divine compassion! This copious emanation of the unalterable love of God in Christ! This is indeed "love divine, all love excelling." The subject contemplated is a foul backslider—God rebuking him—speaking against him, and chastising him severely for his frowardness; and yet, all the while, feeling that sympathy, that commiseration, that working of compassion towards him, that indicated a special relationship existing. Hence the Lord stoops to our infirmities, and condescendingly enquires—"Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? The answer to these gracious interrogatories must be in the *affirmative;* and that will account for all the working of divine benevolence and pity. Chosen in Christ before the

foundation of the world and made a joint heir with him; and God having loved the chosen vessel of mercy with an everlasting love, he therefore with loving kindness drew him, and because he was thus *made* a Son, he in regeneration and effectual calling, sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying Abba, Father! Hence the subject under the influence of the same Spirit in his restoration, is enabled to say: "Thou art the Lord my God!" Here then we have a full display and proof of *unalterable love*, in all the feelings of divine pity, and all the exercises produced by the Spirit of Grace and supplication, in the heart of the poor unworthy offender, who is thus restored and healed! Be astonished, O heaven, and wonder, O earth, break forth into singing O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob and glorified himself in Israel! he hath remembered the forgotten! pitied the unpitied! brought back the outcast! and healed the diseased, whom no man cared for! And lest the poor smitten deer, the wounded and diseased culprit, standing before the Lord in filthy garments, should be discouraged above measure, the good Lord, to shew "how great is his goodness," has most kindly instructed him how to conduct his suit at a throne of grace! "Take with you words and turn unto the Lord: say to him, take away *all* iniquity and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips"—and of all such who have unhappily fallen by their iniquities, but who are mercifully brought thus to plead with God, to renounce their idols, their unhallowed attachments of whatever kind, and look for the exercise of sovereign mercy, from a covenant God, flowing through the blood of Christ, the blood of sprinkling, of all such God hath in mercy said: "*I will heal* their backslidings; I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from them." Read Hosea xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. And let it be remembered, that the word of that God who thus spake by the prophet, stands firmer than heaven and earth. "Hath he

spoken, and shall he not do it? Is the word gone out of his mouth in righteousness, and shall it return void? Is the strength of Israel a man, that he should lie? or the Son of Man, that he should repent?" Far be it from him who is "a God of truth and without iniquity; whose gifts and callings are without repentance; who is of one mind, and none can turn him; the thoughts of whose heart stand fast for a thousand generations; whose honor is engaged to save the meanest of his saints." He *will* chastise for folly—for sin—but it is with a special view to our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. The fruit of his rod is to take away sin. It becomes us then to kiss the rod, to be in subjection to the Father of spirits; and to be everlastingly thankful, that, through the peace speaking blood of the atonement, all the dealings of the divine Majesty with mourners in Zion are in mercy, and not in wrath; and that, while they fully express his abhorrence of sin, and completely vindicate the rectitude of his character and government, they amply shew that "he is mindful of the covenant, and work together for the good of those who love him, who are the called according to his purpose;" and shew his love as firm as free; as unalterable as his throne, without variableness or shadow of turning; and in nothing more strikingly conspicuous, more illustriously displayed and unfolded, than in the subject of this essay, namely, *bearing with, feeling for, and healing poor unhappy backsliders,* who are often despised and rejected of men, even good men, as well as bad. "From sinner and from saint they meet with many a blow—Their own bad heart creates them smart, which none but God doth know." But, though thus treated by men, they are pitied by him who is emphatically, "*The good Shepherd,*" and careth for his own!" who can, and doth have compassion "on those who are out of the way!" The current language of whose word is "return unto me ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you;" yes, married in

"a perpetual covenant that cannot be broken," a covenant that is well ordered in all things and sure!" I have been disposed to treat on this subject, from a conviction of its real importance; from the too well known fact, that not a few of the frail and sin depraved family of God, are in circumstances so unhappy as to need it; and also from a painful conviction that many, very many preachers cannot in a proper and judicious manner treat on it, that many others will not (being very desirous to be thought much better than they really are) and that all are far too remiss and use but very sparing efforts to "bring back that which is driven away, to heal that which is sick, and strengthen that which remains," but our compassionate High Priest, our unchangeable God, the great and good physician of souls, brings to such maimed and diseased patients, "health and cure, and cures them;" and now what shall I say more: doth not the view here taken, however brief and imperfect, give the most endearing and sin killing representation of divine compassion—of forbearance infinite—of pity unheard of—of love unchangeable!—And does it not afford the most heart relieving encouragement to a wounded spirit; most happily calculated, when blessed of God, to induce and encourage the self reproaching mourner, patiently to wait, and quietly to hope, for the salvation of God; even that God who never did, nor never will, "despise nor abhor the afflictions of the afflicted; but when he cries he hears; even the sighing of the needy, and delivers him, and sets him in safety from him that puffeth at him," and even sometimes enables the poor soul who is cast down wounded, to anticipate deliverance with confidence. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, though I fall I shall arise, though I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me!" Let then the poor soul who is sighing and groaning for deliverance, who, like Ephraim, is ashamed of his base ingratitude, yea even confounded with self reproach;

let *such a one* mourn sore like a dove; let him put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; let him lament with David the loathsome disease that cleaves to him, and let him weep bitterly with Peter; but while he thus mourns his wretchedness, and pleads for emancipation, let him not sorrow as without hope; but rather be encouraged to stand still and see the salvation of God: for he that shall come will come, and will not tarry! Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly!

Thus love unchanging, free and rich,
Meets and relieves the sinking wretch,
Who well deserv'd to die!
Forbears with patience infinite,
The daring rebel's soul to smite,
Nor lets his arrows fly!
In mercy visits with the rod,
To bring the wand'rer back to God,
With broken heart and bones;
But while he smites remembers still
His Son, who died on Calvary's hill,
Whose blood for sin atones!
That blood doth cleanse where'er appli'd,
The heart with crimson crimes deep dy'd,
And brings it health and cure!
Then doth the culprit pass from death,
And praise employs his grateful breath,
Because *salvation's* sure!

Not praise alone, but deep complaints
And ardent prayer he pours,
And softly creeps among the saints,
And prostrate—Grace adores!
He's black, he knows, as Kedar's tents,
By sin throughout defil'd;
But through rich grace his heart relents,
That sin hath him beguiled.
He pleads that hence the crooked path
Of folly he may shun,
By love constrain'd and led by faith,
In ways of truth to run!

So shall he never be ashamed,
  Though shame to him belong,
Shame and dismay for crimes unnam'd,
  For passions base and strong!
O! let the humble hear thereof,
  The humble when they're sad,
'Twill them support when scorners scoff,
  And make their spirits glad.

Do thou, Great King, whose potent arm,
Can Satan, world and flesh disarm,
  Thy strength in weakness shew.
Deliverance work—break ev'ry snare,
And bless us *always* with thy fear,
  And prove thy promise true!
Salvation's joys, dear Lord, restore,
And let thy spirit evermore
  Our erring souls uphold.
Then to transgressors vile and base,
Shall all thy ways, thou God of grace,
  With zeal and love be told!

AN ESSAY

ON THE

GOSPEL ORDINANCE,

OF

BELIEVERS BAPTISM.

A NUMBER OF PÆDOBAPTISTS OBJECTIONS ANSWERED,

And their Fallacious Reasonings Exploded.

Should not the multitude of words be answered.—Job xi. 2.

"*What saith the Scripture?*" "*Believe and be Baptized.*"

"And if it be not so now who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth."—Job xxiv. 25.

THE general practice of Pædobaptists in searching after information from Jewish rites and ceremonies, to discover the true nature and proper subjects of an ordinance confessedly a christian one, seems strongly to intimate the weakness of that cause which needs such support; and no doubt a conviction that the New Testament will not avail them, leads men into a long train of analogical reasonings to produce far fetched inferences, inductions, and results, that are vague and uncertain, yea worse, they are evidently fallacious. These are expedients to which the Baptist

never has occasion to resort. Observe once for all: Gospel institutions differ very materially from gospel truths, in this respect especially. Gospel truths are dispersed through the whole scriptures, and are to be sought for from Genesis to Revelation; not so gospel ordinances, they are *positive* institutions, appointed by the great head of the church, and altogether unknown before the christian era; their appointment and practice exclusively appertaining to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The ceremonial law was indeed a shadow of many good and great things to come, but the body or substance of those shadows is of Christ. But it cannot be admitted, because it cannot be proved, that any of the old ceremonies, either Abrahamic or Levitical, were types of New Testament positive institutions. Circumcision was no more a type of baptism than was the pascal lamb of the Lord's Supper. The first was a figure of the circumcision of the heart, or regeneration by the Spirit. The last was a beautiful type of the crucifixion of Christ, and the benefits that flow from it to the election of grace, the true Israel of God; on the other hand, baptism and the Lord's Supper are not types of *any thing*. They have nothing in their primary nature prospective, but are purely retrospective, not looking or pointing to what will be, but referring to what has been. The Lord's Supper doubtless refers to the sufferings of the Lord, when his body was broken and his blood shed for sin, and is a most gracious memorial of that all interesting transaction, in the administration and participation of which, his people have their confidence in him strengthened, their love to, and fellowship with him and one another promoted. "Do this as oft as ye do it in remembrance of me." And baptism as evidently refers to, and is a striking representation of, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The faith of the person baptized in those all important realities, and of his own spiritual death

to sin, burial to the world, and resurrection to newness of life. On these points the following scriptures are most explicit, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. "Know you not, that so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death. Therefore ye are *buried* with him by baptism into *death*, that like as Christ was *raised* up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in *newness* of life." In this portion of the word we have a representation of a *burial* by baptism: "*buried with Christ by baptism*" How clear, how emphatic. We have also a representation of a *resurrection.* "*That like as Christ* (in like manner) *as Christ was raised from the dead;*" "so we (being raised from that semblance of death and a burial) should walk in newness of life." First planted in the *likeness* of his death; then raised in the *likeness* of his resurrection, and walk as living subjects of that resurrection, clear, unequivocal, and explicit as this passage of holy writ is; yet if need be, and if it be possible, Col ii. 12. is more explicit, particularly as to baptism, being a striking semblance of a resurrection, whether it be Christ's resurrection, or the believing subject of baptism, it is the same. Thus it reads: "*Buried* with him *by baptism, wherein* also ye are *risen* with him." Now observe this last clause in particular. Believers are first said to be buried with Christ by baptism, and then it is affirmed thus: "*Wherein* (or in which baptism) ye are *risen* with him through the faith of the operation of God." That is to say, in the exercise of that faith, which was produced in their hearts by the special and operative influence of the Holy Ghost, they were enabled to understand the true nature of that baptism with which they were baptized, as aptly representing (among other things) a burial and resurrection. Here is every thing clear and plain, so that he who runs may read—No criticising on a Greek word or two, of which the wayfaring men (in general) know nothing—no reverting

back several thousand years before the existence of that dispensation to which the ordinance of baptism exclusively belongs, for a far fetched inference from the Abrahamic covenant—but instead of this circuitous, and I may add, unfair procedure, we have in the passages now remarking on, the words of the Holy Ghost!—words too, it must be observed, which are used expressly on the subject. I would now ask, if the mode and design of Christian baptism is so clear, so explicit and so unequivocal, in these passages of holy writ, which, by the bye, are the statute laws, or illustrations of the statute laws of Christ's kingdom, given by him as the head and law giver of his church, how comes it to pass (I ask) that Pædobaptists, in general, when they are professedly instructing the people in the design of baptism, should overlook, and apparently keep back, facts so obvious, and exclusively direct the attention of their hearers and readers to some other view of the subject—some view which may appear to comport with their practice. Such as refering them to a passage like this: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean;" or to the various sprinklings appointed under the Levitical law, or at best, to "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." But unfortunately for the advocates of the sprinkling practice, there is no mention made of baptism, nor is the ordinance of Christian baptism once associated with any of these circumstances, nor do the terms in which the ordinance is expressed, ever imply sprinkling, or even pouring; but uniformly dipping, plunging, immersing, and so on, as is well known by all candid and well informed Pædobaptists, as I may have occasion to notice in this essay. I have asked how it is that Pædobaptists act thus; apparently shunning the scriptural and obvious view and design of the ordinance, and bringing forward something foreign and merely allusive, and that not correctly. And I must say that there appears no reason for such

a line of conduct, but the following too obvious one, namely:—A conviction that there is nothing in the sprinkling of an infant that has the remotest semblance or likeness to a burial or a resurrection, nor is there any thing in the subject of this (supposed) baptism (namely, the infant,) that looks like a partaker of the faith of the operation of God, practising an institution appointed by the head of the church, for the observance of his believing people, and that too, as the first act of their obedience, upon or after believing. "Believe and be baptized," is the order of Christ's house, and it is much to be wished, that as Pædobaptist ministers will not, or at least do not, present to their hearers correct views of this ordinance, that the godly among their hearers would cease to put confidence in a guide, and search the scriptures, and (praying for divine instruction) soberly reflect on the subject for themselves, and especially that parents, who may contemplate taking their beloved offspring to their minister to be christened, that such should first search and see if such a practice is required at their hands, and whether they can make the practice comport with the scriptural representation of the ordinance, as to mode and subject, and if God disposes their hearts honestly to make his word the man of their counsel. I promise myself they will hesitate before they act, and I hope forbear to do that which is no less than a profanation of the divine name to a device of man, that the scripture knows nothing about, and contains neither *precept* nor *example* on the subject. So decidedly is this the fact, that the Papal hierarchy, the mother of abominations, is obliged to confess, and does confess herself indebted to *tradition*, to prove the validity of the baptism of infants. But while there is positively *nothing* in the practice of sprinkling, that conforms in any degree with the before cited passages, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. Col. ii. 12. it is worth observing how very close the fact corresponds with the design, when believing men and

women are baptized by immersion. Whoever has witnessed believers baptism, might have read (as it were) the language of holy writ, in that which they beheld with their eyes. But it seems impossible for a by stander at the ceremony of infant sprinkling to relate what he saw in the language of scripture. I will suppose a man to attempt it in a simple manner, and his relation must run nearly as follows: We have had a child christened at church to-day—Two or three friends came forward and delivered a young child into the arms of the minister, and after he had received it, he dipped, plunged or immersed his *fingers* in a bason of water, and calling the little stranger by some name, he told him he baptized him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and as he so expressed himself, *(to the infant, which did not appear to understand him,)* he dropt or sprinkled a *few drops* of water on the little one's forehead, and then returned it to those from whom he received it. Now I ask, in the name of common sense, in the name of truth, I ask, what could the hearer of such a faithful narration recognise, that bears the remotest analogy to a positive institution in the gospel church, (except indeed the use, or rather misuse, perhaps I might say abuse of the names of the divine persons,) and while I wish Pædobaptists to look soberly on this ceremony, and view and contemplate its puerility, its absurdity, its total want of authority, from the figures used in scripture, and from either precept or example, I would beg on the other hand, as it is much to be wished, that Pædobaptists would seriously contemplate the administration of the ordinance of believers baptism, and if they have not seen it, and shun seeing it, let them candidly attend to the relation of some friend who has seen it, and who will in proper language relate what he saw and heard, and it will be found that his detail will be as follows:—There has been a man baptized today. The minister and the man to be baptized came

to the margin of the water, and after a gospel address, praying and singing, the minister took the man by the hand, and they went sedately down into the water, both the minister and the man, and then the minister addressed himself to the man thus: Brother, on a profession of your faith in Christ, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. So saying, he baptized him by immersing him in the water, and then they came up out of the water, both the minister and the baptized man, and they retired and I saw them no more. Now I ask any man who reads his Bible, on hearing this simple and correct narration, if he would not immediately recognise, and be ready to exclaim, this agrees exactly with the account we have of Philip baptizing the eunuch. Acts viii. 37, 38, 39. Yes, indeed, it was designed so to do, to be a counter part, a mere copy of the original practice. In this the Baptists hold it their duty and honor to be mere copyists—to say with Paul, "I have delivered unto you that which I also received;" not from Moses nor from Abraham, but "from the Lord;" and happy is it for that church that keeps the ordinances as they were delivered to the first churches, by the Lord and his apostles.

The frivolous attempts which have been so often made to prove the *right* of children to baptism, are as fruitless as they are frivolous: They are mostly drawn from the Old Testament practice of circumcision; but even in this ordinance we can perceive nothing like a *right* in the subject: for it was not a *privilege* granted to unconscious children, but a *duty* enjoined on the parents: "Ye shall circumcise your male children on the *eighth* day." This was a national badge, a duty common to every Israelite, good or bad; it was one of those carnal ordinances that was by God imposed or enjoined on that people until the time of reformation, and as a punishment to the disobedient parent, who neglected this ordinance, the child was to be cut off. Circumcision then was

an act of obedience of the parent (to whom the command speaks) and not an act of obedience in the child, which was unconscious of any law, and altogether passive, but baptism is an act of obedience of the subject of baptism; to him the command is directed, "Arise and be baptized." "Repent and be baptized." To him also who is the subject of baptized, is the *privilege* granted. *"If thou believest, thou mayest be baptized."* Acts viii. 37. Observe from these remarks the essential difference in the two institutions and their subjects; and further, circumcision was national—Every Israelite, good or bad, was bound to circumcise his sons, whether he feared God, or feared him not; but what nation under heaven, as a nation, are commanded to be baptized, much less to baptize their sons.—Individuals of all nations are commanded to be baptized, on their being brought to "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," but not before; for it must be observed that baptism is the obedience of faith, not of the law. Moral commands and gospel institutions differ essentially. The former are obligatory on all men, at all times, and under all circumstances. Jewish rites and ceremonies were obligatory only on the Jews, and such proselites as were identified with that nation, and that only for a time—"Until the time of reformation; until the seed should come." But baptism and the Lord's Supper are institutions to be observed until the end of the world, but they call for obedience only from the household of faith; they are binding on no others, for they are not enjoined on men as men, but as repenting, as believing men. So that we have no charge to exhibit against an unbeliever, because he is not baptized, and does not partake of the Lord's Supper; so far from it, both ordinances are withheld from him until he makes a profession, and gives evidence that he is a partaker of that faith which purifieth the heart and works by love. How absurd then must all attempts at analogical reasoning be on sub-

jects between which there is no analogy. Abraham and his sons are surely not types of professed christians and their children, their sons and their daughters, no certainly not, Abraham was a type (in the offering of his son) of the divine Father; but in his general character I think he was a type of Christ. Isaac was evidently a type of the church, in his being devoted to be sacrificed, and in being delivered by the substitution of the ram which was caught by his own act, which ram was a glorious type of Christ, who by his own act voluntarily engaged himself to redeem his church from death, and from the curse of the law, and every thing implied in that curse! "I lay down my life for my sheep, no man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself." Again, infant Israelites as the seed of Abraham, are surely not types of our infants, but rather of babes in Christ, that seed that is to serve him in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, yielding to him that obedience which a new and spiritual dispensation calls for, and that under the influence of new principles; not being under the law of ceremonies, nor under the law of works, as the ministration of death, but under grace. Further, the nation of the Jews, as the descendants of Abraham, appears to be a type of the election of grace, who are brought to believe through grace, and *their* little ones appear to be types of those children of the true Zion which she labours to bring forth, and which she does bring forth unto God, "who are born not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the flesh, but of God: and who, "as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby." Now, my friends, if these things are so, how is it that men possessed of so many advantages, will still persist in a mode of reasoning so evidently groundless? Is it to be understood as a tacit acknowledgment, that they have nothing better to offer? This doubtless is the fact, for the subjects advanced by these ingenious

Pædobaptist analogical reasoners, have no foundation in the New Testament: there is no precept enjoining, nor any example to be found, in the whole code of New Testament laws, or their application to practice, by the apostles, for the baptizing of infants in any way, or the baptizing of any subject, infant or adult, by sprinkling; the advocates for such practices have time and often been challenged to produce them, but have never yet been able, and we may say with confidence they never will: for, as Solomon says, "that which is wanting, cannot be numbered!" We may then safely affirm, that the strenuous, laborious, and voluminous hunting for analogy is of *necessity!* But it is fruitless, except to mislead the unwary, the indolent, and the weak; for no analogy that can avail exists.

There is but one point of the remotest agreement between circumcision and infant sprinkling, which is that of attending to them both in infancy. The Jewish rite must be performed by express command on the eighth day; but Pædobaptists attend to their ceremonies the eighth day, or eighth week, or month, or even year, as it seems good in their eyes; and then, when they do attend to them, we are told by some that these great results follow, namely—That the subject is made a child of God! a member of Christ! and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven! Very grand assertions; but unfortunately very false, and awfully deceptive. Others less heterodox tell us, that the child by baptism (as they call sprinkling) becomes a member of the visible church by virtue of the parents faith! But, I think, it must be acknowledged that in many instances the parents themselves are destitute of faith, and if they are so happy as to be partakers of faith, to the saving of their own souls, their faith in this instance must needs be good for nothing, for here is no record, no word of faith, no promise, and faith to be good and available must refer to a divine record, a divine promise. But it may

be asked what membership can a child have in the church of Christ? Let it be remembered that the church of Christ is his body, and each believer is a particular member of that body. But can an unbeliever be a member of Christ's body? Certainly not. Then, by consequence, not a member of his church, which is his body. But the Pædobaptists will say, such may be members of his visible body. Observe, Christ's mistical body comprises those only, who, through grace, really and in truth believe in him; while what is called his visible body, or church, comprises all who profess to believe in him, whether they so believe in truth or not. But the Pædobaptists give the Saviour a more defective body than this; for they maintain that those are members of his body who do not nor cannot make even such a profession, and who, they believe in their hearts, are quite destitute of any good thing toward the Lord, and, as a proof that they so think, they deny their communion at the Lord's table. So here is exhibited the strange anomaly of membership without communion. Are not these things glaring inconsistencies? A member, not under any censure, denied communion. But why? Because not a christian; so that the baptized member is confessedly an infidel, according to their own shewing.

Pædobaptists appear to think, that not to baptize children is to be criminally negligent of their soul's welfare. But to make this appear, they should shew us that God hath required it at their hands. Surely sprinkling a child is not what the word means by "training a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Cannot a Baptist pray for his children, and with his children? Cannot he instruct them from the word of God, and set a good example before them? Cannot he take them to the house of God to hear his word, &c.? Yes, surely; and notwithstanding the great and much to be regretted neglect of many, yet I believe that Baptists who have believed through

grace, with the heart unto righteousness, and who have, with the mouth, made confession unto salvation, are (at least) as diligent in every good word and work as their fellow christians of any other denomination. They know well, as all do who know the truth, that they can do nothing efficiently to effect their conversion—but this ought not, and I hope it does not (at least generally) paralize their instrumental efforts. But if, with all the professed candor and moderation of some of our opponents, and with all the fiery zeal of some others, attempts are to be perpetually made to seduce us from the truth, by altering the reading of every passage of holy writ, that in its present rendering presents insuperable obstacles in the way of the Pædobaptists, then indeed we are in a bad predicament; for if it be lawful and right for every smatterer in Greek to beguile or perplex the mere English reader, by contending that to go down *into* the water, should be read to go down *to* the water, and to come up *out* of the water, should be read to come up *from* the water, and other similar and equally erroneous alterations, then indeed the simple christian may be for ever tossed about with every wind of doctrine. But let it be observed by way-faring men, (for whom I write) that the alterations here noticed, as made by the Pædobaptists, are not the *most natural* rendering of the Greek words, but that only which the words in some connections would bear; the absurdity of the arguments drawn from such forced translations to support an unscriptural practice is sufficiently obvious—but instead of citing the authority of individual Greek scholars, I will content myself with asking our opponents this question: How came it to pass that the translators of the Bible could not make these discoveries? They were not Baptists, and therefore cannot be suspected of being misled by any predilection for the Baptists' views. But, though not Baptists, they were *profound* scholars and honest men, (though not infallible) and their numbers very

considerable; and they have given us a reading that the Pædobaptists of every name are confounded with! but with which the Baptists are well pleased and fully satisfied!

The truth is, that very many of the wisest and best of the Pædobaptists have acknowledged that immersion upon believing was practised by the apostles and primitive christians, and that infant baptism was never attempted until the third century, when it was immediately opposed by one Tertullian; and although it continued to take increasing root under the power of the man of sin, through the fourth and fifth centuries, yet the English churches were preserved from it, till Gregory the seventh, bishop (or rather pope) of Rome, sent that artful and bloody fox, Austin the Monk, into England in the year 596; and it appears pretty clear and evident, that children were for a long time baptized by immersion, and not by sprinkling; for long after the corruptions of popery had introduced infant baptism, the framers of the Rubrick of the Episcopal church of England, appointed their fonts to be made large enough to admit the *immersion* of the child; and to this day it is a standing law of that establishment, that the priest shall *dip* the child in the water of the font, except the parents or others shall vouch that the child's health will not admit of immersion without danger, then, and only then, according to their canon laws, the priest is *permitted*, not *commanded*, to sprinkle. It is true, in the modern built churches, both in England and in this city, the fonts, as they are called, are far too small for immersion. So successful has the priesthood been in "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," that it is no uncommon thing to hear blind guides, pointing to the font, say, "there stands the laver of regeneration." If such blind leaders of the blind, were regenerated themselves by the agency of the Spirit and the instrumentality of the word of God, they would know that the all important work was not effected by a few

drops of water *from* the font, nor *at* the font, but to leave them in his hands who will deal with blind watchmen and greedy wolves according to his sovereign pleasure and return to the subject of this essay, and resume these desultory observations, by asking the following question: If sprinkling was the apostolic practice or method, how are we to account for John's being said to baptize at Enon, for this plain reason—there was much water there? So the text reads: "John was baptizing at Enon, near to Salem, because there was *much water there!*" John iii. Here let it be observed, we have no need of either Greek or geographical criticisms, to make us believe that there was not much water at Enon, although the words of the Holy Spirit, which are rendered into plain English, and cannot well be misunderstood, inform us that there was, and on that account was selected by the venerable Baptist, as a convenient place for the administration of the ordinance.

When we so uniformly find *repenting*—believing—receiving the word—rejoicing in God—and such like expressions accompanying, nay go before baptism, we are constrained to believe that such subjects only as did so believe, repent, &c. were baptized, especially as we find no one passage in which christian baptism is introduced or enforced, that children are once named as the subjects thereof, or in which parents are commanded or instructed to have their children baptized. The obvious truth of these remarks perplexes the Pædobaptists, and drives them as a last shift to hunt for children in the house of the *Philippian jailor*, of *Lydia*, and of *Cornelius*, but they have not yet been so successful as to find any. As to Cornelius, who was a Roman officer, the probability is, that he had none about him but soldiers; but be that as it may, it is very evident that those who were baptized had received the Holy Ghost. And Peter proves the propriety of their being baptized on that ground, and on that only. Acts x. 47, 48. "Can any man for-

bid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."—Thus much for Cornelius. I think a man must have a wonderful penetration to find any children baptized here.

As to Lydia, it does not even appear that she had either children or a husband. But one thing does evidently appear, that Lydia was baptized on the reception of truth, and being judged to be faithful, "the Lord opened her heart to attend" to truth, and after she was baptized she addresses the apostles thus: "If you have judged me to be faithful, come into my house." Acts xvi. 14, 15. Now if Lydia was baptized on the reception of truth, and being judged to be faithful, the fair inference is, that whoever else was baptized in her house, were baptized on the same grounds—both she and her household were sinners alike in the sight of God, and if all were enabled to believe in him, in whom the Gentiles trust, then all were proper subjects of baptism; but not otherwise, for so runs the apostolic commission: "Preach the gospel to every creature—he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"—and further, the gospel dispensation knows nothing of the parent receiving any blessing or doing any act or duty in the name of the child, or of the child receiving any thing in the right of the parent.

As to the case of the jailor, it is clear on the face of the history, that whoever constituted his house, they were such as had had the word of God spoken to them, and had believed and rejoiced in God. Acts xvi. 32, 33, 34. They could not then be infants. And it may be here observed, once for all, that the terms house and household, do not necessarily include children, even where the parties have children. Hence we read, Gen. xviii. 19. thus: "I know Abraham that he will command his *children*, and his *household* after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Now

here is an evident distinction between *children* and *household*, which I wish to be particularly noticed, for it is plain from hence that its being said that Lydia's household were baptized, and the jailor's house, proves nothing in favor of infant baptism, even although it could be proved that, like Abraham, they had children. Observe the terms of distinction: "His *children*, and his *household*;" and further, it cannot well be conceived, when we have such frequent mention of men and women being baptized, but that if there had been any children, it would have been named. We should have heard, as we do in the Old Testament, of their little ones, of their children, &c.—but no; nothing of the kind once occurs, for this plain reason: Every thing under the gospel is personal and nothing federative. Personal conversion *only*, constitutes the christian. Mere descent from Abraham and circumcision constituted an Israelite, and conferred national, and even religious privileges, in which the uncircumcised Gentile could not participate. But now the middle wall is broken down and descent is nothing. It is now of no avail to say, "We have Abraham for our father. "Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing; but a new creature, whether he be bond or free, near or far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, to the fellowship of his Son," and no more. "The Lord knoweth them that are his, and whom he foreknew them he also called, and whom he called, them he justified, and whom he justified, them he glorified." And this prescience, this foreknowledge, and foreordination of God, is the seal of his foundation: that is, they render valid and irrevocable that foundation which he has laid. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this *seal*, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one (adds the apostle) that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The Pædobaptists are extremely fond of searching for other seals. Sometimes they represent the partaking of the Lord's Supper as

sealing covenant with God; sometimes they consider baptism as a seal, and the same is said of the old rite of circumcision; but the scripture certainly knows nothing of these things. I have just shewn that the foundation of God hath a seal, which is this: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Believers are also said to be "sealed with the holy spirit of promise." But first there is a hearing of the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, then a "trusting in Christ," and then follows the sealing of the spirit. This renders all valid in the believers state—for the sealing is "an earnest of inheritance," and is to continue till God's gracious purposes of mercy are complete. "Until the redemption of the purchased possession." And it is by this firm, stable process that God promotes his own everlasting honor, "to the praise of his own glory." Eph. i. 13, 14. Again: we read of a seal in the case of Abraham, Rom. iv. 11.—but it is not a seal of any covenant, for observe circumcision is there said to be "a seal of that righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised." Circumcision is indeed said to be "a *token* (but not a seal) of the covenant" between Abraham and God. Gen. xvii. 11.—That is, I presume, a badge or sign as Paul hath it, Rom. iv. 11. to distinguish Abraham's descendants from Alieus to the commonwealth of Israel.

Those therefore who are so much in the habit of talking about sealing covenant with God, would do well to consider seriously what they are doing, for it appears to be evidently erroneous and somewhat dangerous, to represent any act of the creature which is an act of obedience, to any moral or positive law, as rendering valid or secure any covenant, or covenant blessing, inasmuch as it diverts the mind of the sinner from the true ground of all hope, and all stability, namely, the blood and obedience of Christ, and the oath and promise of God. And if baptism or the Lord's Supper are seals of the covenant of grace, what is to become of those christians who, for want of better

light, or from other motives more illaudable, neglect both baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is therefore much to be regretted, that any should be found propagating sentiments, and pursuing practices, that have no foundation by precept or precedent, in the glorious gospel of the blessed God. And I think it equally to be regretted, that so little zeal is manifested in the cause of truth by those who say they "esteem all God's precepts concerning all things to be right."

The Pædobaptists raise objections to the practice of *immersion*, from the difficulties they fancy to exist. Sometimes from want of convenient water; sometimes from the numbers said to be baptized. But while nothing short of absolute impossibility could justify such kind of objections, in the face of so much clear and explicit evidence, it may be said with truth, that the objections are of that nature, that it requires no small degree of charity, to believe the objectors sincere in making them. First, as to sufficient water for immersion. When numbers were to be baptized it was common to administer the ordinance in a river—the river Jordan. Mark i. 5, 9, 10. Matthew iii. 6 to 13. But when individuals or households, or even considerable numbers were to be baptized, it was not unfrequently done in a more private way. The jailor and his house, and Cornelius and his friends, for instance. But can it be reasonably supposed, that there could be any want of water, when it is so well known that baths in houses and gardens were so common in that country. Is it to be supposed there was no reservoir of water in the prison yard, or garden, or house, of the prison-keeper of Philippi, near to which ran a river—Acts xvi. 13.—or in the house of a Roman officer, Cornelius. It cannot be proved there was not: and the fact of baptizing in such places is, at least, a strong presumptive proof that there was; seeing so many cases are on record that evidently shew the use of *much water*. In the case of Lydia, we learn that she heard the word of grace, and was

converted to God by *a river side*, and then and there she and her household were baptized. Acts xvi. 13, 14, 15. And when three thousand were to be baptized, there surely could be no difficulty to immerse for want of water. There was the pool of Siloam, a place of common resort, in which the infirm washed. There was also the pool of Bethesda, a place of considerable magnitude. It is said to have had five porches, in which lay *a great multitude* of impotent folk. Now, without naming any more, these would be sufficient; though doubtless there were many private pools and baths, and perhaps public ones also. There must have been abundance of water used about the temple for all their divers washings; but then, some Pædobaptists have tried to persuade their hearers, that the prejudices of the Jews were so strong, that they would not suffer the apostles to use their sacred waters, (as they are pleased to call them.) How exceeding weak and futile are such objections! They are indeed a reflection, both on the understanding and integrity of the objectors; for, let it be observed first, that the three thousand baptized were Jews, or mostly such, and had a common right to all their public waters; and further, such was the power of God displayed, that fear fell upon all the people, even great fear upon every soul—Acts ii. 43.—and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. It was a day of wonder, and it was not (on such occasions) for a few vicious priests and bigotted Pharisees to offer any opposition: but especially I would have it obseved, that these very apostles who are supposed by our opponents to be refused the use of public pools, are permitted to make frequent use of the public temple, and not only like their Master, reprove and rebuke the scribes, lawyers and Pharisees, in their own temple, but frequently to preach the words of life and salvation to the people, without asking permission of any. Now surely, if the Jews would have guarded their pools from such a use, they would

much more have guarded their temple, which they held so sacred. These kind of arguments brought forward against the apostolic practice of immersion, can have no lasting effect on any but the unwary, the indolent, and the weak.

But it is further objected, that on this occasion the number was so considerable that they could not have had *time* to immerse them. When men adduce such weak arguments, it proves they have no better. Does it not take Pædobaptists as long to sprinkle, as it does Baptists to immerse? Doubtless it does; but perhaps it will be said, that the apostles, on the plan of the Pædobaptists, could have marshalled them in rows and have sprinkled them from a bowl of water by dozens or hundreds, as the priests under the law sprinkled the people with a bunch of hysop, or as popish priests sprinkle the people with holy water; but so did not the apostles of the lamb, they did every thing "decently and in order."

But to attend a little further to the objection on the score of *time*. Was there not time for immersion? yes, assuredly, the time is noted to be the third hour, (that is nine o'clock.) Now it appears that the apostles had been long speaking before this hour, in about fourteen different languages, the report of it had spread through Jerusalem, the people had gathered together and were confounded; no doubt they had been speaking from the commencement of day.—"When the day of pentecost was fully come," Acts ii. 1. the probability therefore is, that after this effect from Peter's ministry, that he did not speak long, say one hour, and there is no appearance of any other of the apostles speaking after this, so that this would close the public preaching at ten o'clock. The number of the apostles was twelve, by which divide three thousand, and it gives two hundred and fifty to each apostle: Now I would ask how long need a man be baptizing his brother where occasion required despatch? *Can* it not be done, and *is*

it not often done with perfect decency and decorum *in one minute?* Doubtless it can and is. This would not take quite four hours and a quarter. Now allow three quarters of an hour to go to convenient places after public speaking closed—this would only bring it to three o'clock. There would then be three hours of the Jewish day remaining, which was surely more than enough to receive this highly favored army into the fellowship of the church. It will be observed, that I have taken no notice of the seventy disciples, whom the Lord sent forth to preach; and if they were present and assisted on this occasion, which is more than probable, it would, in that case, reduce the number to be baptized by each administrator, to about thirty-six.

Thus much for these kind of objections against believers baptism by immersion. I am well aware that truth does not require either geographical criticism or arithmetical calculations; but when the opposers of a scriptural practice bring forward (for the want of something better,) their *profound* calculations to perplex us, it becomes necessary to rebut them, because the unwary, the indolent, and the weak, are beguiled.

Before I dismiss this interesting piece of New Testament history, namely, the conversion and baptism of three thousand souls, and their addition to the church of Christ, I must be permitted to ask our opponents this question: If children were baptized in the apostles days, how came it to pass, that of all this mighty number that were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, not one of them appears to have brought a single infant for baptism? The reverse indeed appears clear and decisive, from the passage connected with the account of their baptism—Acts ii. 42.—"They (that is, those who were baptized) continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer." These are acts that can only be performed, by living and believing members of Christ and his church. Infants cannot

perform them. There can be then no infants in this goodly and highly favored company. How vain then for Pædobaptists to talk of their infant members, made so (say they) by baptism, when they know they are utterly incapable of the fore-named acts. Infants can know nothing of "the apostles doctrine," much less can they shew "stedfastness in it." They cannot know any thing of "*fellowship* with the saints." They (that is infants) are not permitted to "break bread" in Christ's name; and if they were, they could not "discern the Lord's body," and do it in a believing remembrance of him, nor are they capable, as infants, of "continuing in prayer," or of once offering the prayer of faith.

Among all the objections brought against immersion and in favor of sprinkling, it is not usual to find any brought from the meaning of the word "baptize," or any of its derivatives, as baptism, baptizing, baptist, &c. That ground has been generally ceded to the Baptists by men of the first information. That is, they have admitted what none can with truth deny, that the *primary* meaning of the Greek word rendered baptize, is to dip, as a *dyer dips his cloth to tinge it*, to plunge, so as to immerse, to overwhelm whatever, or whoever is baptized. Such candid men on the Pædobaptists side, have only contended that its *secondary* meaning is to wash; and that to *dip* or *immerse*, is only in order to wash, and as washing can be done without immersion, it is not expedient so to do. But while Pædobaptists have in general, very many of them, made such concessions, some few have ventured in their zeal to affirm that the word very rarely, if ever, is used to express immersion. This certainly is bold, and not calculated to impress a very high opinion of their candor or correctness: for if men of learning Baptists and Pædobaptists, lexicographers and critics, are capable of knowing the meaning of the word, and worthy of being credited, *it is not true;* and unfortunately for such champions of error, they

do not, nor cannot produce a single passage, in which the word was used to express the act of sprinkling; not one!—and in those passages where it is rendered *wash*, it is evidently a result flowing from immersion. They know well that the Jews, when they went to eat, and when they had, or supposed they had, contracted any uncleanness, they *plunged*, or *immersed* their hands *in* water. They did not sprinkle a few drops on them, or even pour a small quantity on them out of a vessel—no; they plunged them in the vessel: and those who are well acquainted with the Rabinical writings say, that in proportion to the degree of pollution they had contracted, so they dippped their hands, more or less deep, to the wrist, or to the elbow, or still deeper; thus it appears, that in order to wash they plunged, and not sprinkled. What argument then does this practice (called washing) furnish against the legitimate meaning of the word, or the scriptural practice of immersion, still maintained by the Baptists, and for more than thirteen centuries practised by all Christendom, as it yet is by the Greek church. The learned Dr. Whitby informs us, that "Immersion was religiously observed by all christians for thirteen centuries, and was approved by the church of England," of which he was a clergyman; and even Dr. Wall, in his history of infant baptism, declares "that all the countries in the world which never regarded the usurped authority of the Pope, still use dipping in a font." Thus have two eminent Pædobaptists admitted, that immersion is the scriptural and long practised mode, till the Pope's influence, seconded by the assembly of divines (as they are called) at Westminster, almost blotted it out of use, except as retained and practised by a despised people, who hold it their duty and their honor "to keep the ordinances of the Lord, as they were delivered unto them."

I would now solemnly ask Pædobaptists of every name this interesting question: "*Was Jesus Christ's*

baptism sprinkling, or immersion?" that baptism about which he thus speaks, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." I think no *friend* of Christ's will say that his sufferings were mere *drops* or gentle pourings; no, sirs, "his baptism (as Mr. Hart says) was a baptism deep indeed, o'er hands, and feet, and face, and head."—He was immersed, overwhelmed, not sprinkled with, but plunged into, a sea of suffering, so as to make him cry "all thy *billows* and thy *waves* are gone over me." He endured all that the floods of ungodly men could inflict in their hour!—He bore all that the old dragon Satan, (who poured a flood out against the church) could afflict him with in his hour, the power of darkness! and what was far more dreadful, he bore the floods of divine displeasure when "the pains of hell got hold upon him," when in the bitterness of his soul he exclaimed, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me!" Here surely, baptism means nothing less than to be plunged into unutterable sufferings, overwhelming anguish and misery.—"Of his sufferings so intense, angels have no perfect sense; 'tis to God, and God alone, that their weight is fully known." Thus much for the baptism of suffering, which it appears was not *sprinkling* but immersion.

I will now draw the attention of my readers to the baptism of the spirit, and here we shall find nothing about sprinkling, but before I proceed permit me to observe, that the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is not his converting and regenerating influence, but his miraculous presence and operation, such as no man is now the partaker of. When men therefore *now*, talk of being baptized with the Holy Ghost, they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm; and I wish this fact to be attentively observed and remembered, for many mistakes may arise out of this mistake. But to come to the proof, let the instances on record where men appear to be baptized with the

Holy Ghost, be carefully considered, and it will evidently appear, that it was not at, or to effect their conversion, but after their conversion, and miraculous influence immediately manifested itself. "They spake with tongues," &c. Acts x. 46. That Cornelius was a converted man (though but ill informed) needs no better proof than this, that "he feared God and wrought righteousness;" and he, on the preaching of Peter was baptized with the Holy Ghost, "he fell on all that heard the word, and they spake with tongues and magnified God." Acts x. 46.

The Corinthian disciples also, mentioned Acts xix. 1 to 6, were converted, were believers, and were baptized, and *then* they received the Holy Ghost; they were enveloped and filled with his miraculous presense and influence, "and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

But the most striking instance is in the apostles themselves. In Acts i. 5. we have this promise of Christ to them.—"Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." When was this promise accomplished? doubtless on the day of Pentecost, when they were all with one accord in one place. Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4. when "a rushing mighty wind *filled all the house* where they were sitting," and then this rushing mighty wind assumed, or was succeeded by the appearance of "cloven tongues, as of fire, which sat (or rested) on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." We are surely to understand by this rushing mighty wind the *miraculous* presence and operation of the Spirit of God, with which according to the promise—Acts i. 5.—they were baptized; not sprinkled, but immersed, enveloped, for observe, it "*filled* them, and *filled all the house*, where they were sitting:" consequently immersed them—this Peter calls the pouring out of the Spirit, promised in Joel's prophesy. Acts ii. 17, 18. Not a sparing sprinkling, but a copious effusion; such a pouring out as did completely baptize the subjects.

This was indeed "*pouring* water upon the thirsty, even *floods* upon the dry ground"—not drops, observe, but *floods*. These and similar instances of the miraculous presence and operation of the Holy Ghost, appear to be what is meant by the baptism of the Spirit, and such instances were common in the apostolic age, but are *now* totally unknown.

Let not christians then talk at random of being baptized with the Spirit; but content themselves if they possess evidence, that they are "born again of the Spirit, regenerated by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, and led by the Spirit," for such are "heirs of promise and children of God—such are Christ's, and their life is hid *with* Christ *in* God; and when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they also shall appear with him in glory, and so shall they ever be with the Lord." So says the Spirit of truth, and on this foundation the apostles advice is, "Comfort one another with these words." Let not the opponents of believers baptism by immersion, the advocates of infant sprinkling, think to find any analogy (that will help them out) between the Spirit's baptism, and the sprinkling a few, very few drops of water on the face of a child, for it has been clearly shewn, that to be baptized *with* the Spirit, is to be a partaker of a plenitude of his *miraculous* presence and influence.

Once more:—It is sometimes made a matter of triumph by Pædobaptists, that there is mention made by Paul—1 Cor. x. 1, 2.—of a baptism, in which they suppose it evident that children were baptized, though this by no means appears from the passage; for although there was women and children, and a large mixed multitude that followed the camp of Israel, yet no mention is made of either the one or the other. Paul only says, that "all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses, *in* the sea, and *in* the cloud." It seems an unwarrantable stretch of words, to include women and children, male and female, and

a mixed multitude, under the appellation of "our fathers." It seems far more natural and congenial to truth, to suppose that the words include only the grown up men of Israel, (or perhaps only the heads of houses) who were in truth the fathers of the Jewish nation. But whoever they were, we are informed, that "with many of them God was not well pleased," for "he overthrew them in the wilderness." Even many of those who were baptized, appear to be such as "coveted after evil things, were idolaters, and committed fornication, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." 1 Cor. x. 5, 6, 7, 8. Such characters could not be the children of the men of Israel. They were not capable of such crimes, nor were they overthrown in the wilderness, but were preserved, and finally brought into the goodly land promised to their fathers, who "entered not in because of unbelief." But if it were necessary to understand the expression "*all our fathers*," as including the children, yet what (I ask) would be gained to the cause of infant sprinkling? Verily nothing. For under the gospel we have nothing national, nor have we any thing federative; but all is personal, while under the law there was much of both—mere descent conferred on the children the privilege pertaining to the parent.

Further: as to the mode practised by Pædobaptists, there appears nothing in the circumstances here recorded, to favor in the least the practice of sprinkling; for they are said to be baptized "*in* the cloud and *in* the sea," not *from* the sea or cloud, as though a small spray from the sea, or a few drops of rain from the cloud, had fallen on them—no, not so—but words are used which evidently denote immersion—Cor. x. 2. "They were all baptized unto Moses *in* the cloud and *in* the sea." That is, I conceive, they were all buried, as it were, *in* the channel of the sea, and under the covering of a circumambient cloud; buried to all expectation from and connexion with Egypt, or any

of its good things, (all of which were emblematic of this evil world and a carnal state,) and after being so buried, they experienced a figurative resurrection; they rose from out of the sea, and from under the cloud, to Moses. That is, subject to his government as king in Jeshurun, and God's vicegerent, at least, they were professedly subject. And although I did not think myself bound to answer thus, the objection raised from this occurrence, inasmuch as it was no ordinance, or religious institution of any dispensation, but an extraordinary occurrence, from which I think no argument ought to be brought, to determine either the subject, or mode of an ordinance, that had no existence until the christian era, yet nevertheless, as our opponents are wont to make a handle of it, I have considered it, and combated their arguments, and I verily believe, that it would puzzle the ingenuity of the most acute, to make these circumstances look like any thing short of immersion.

It appears to be extremely ridiculous to contend, as our opponents do, that the mere application of water to the subject, constitutes the essence of baptism; every thing that baptism is made *(in scripture)* to represent, forbids such an absurd idea, such as a burial, and resurrection in particular. Who among all the analogical reasoners has ingenuity enough, to trace any likeness, between the sprinkling of a few drops of water on the face of an infant, and the burial and resurrection of a human body. I expect no one will undertake so impracticable a task; and further I would ask, when afflictions and intense sufferings are compared to, and called a baptism? Is water in any small quantity alluded to, or an overwhelming quantity? Surely a small quantity is always salutary, and desirable, and water can never be made the emblem of suffering and death, except when a considerable quantity is alluded to, not *drops*, to sprinkle; but *floods, billows, waves*, to *immerse*, to *overwhelm*, then indeed, and only then, it is a very apt emblem of suffering.

Was Christ's sufferings (which I have already treated on) the mere application of suffering, just touching him as it were? or were they overwhelming sufferings? doubtless they were of the latter character; but be it remembered, Christ's sufferings are called a baptism; to baptize then, is to *immerse*, and not to sprinkle, and to be a fit subject for baptism, is to be a partaker of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory. Amen.

Thus *truth* must prevail,
And *error* must fail,
If scripture's allow'd to decide;
Though foes may contend,
Still Jesus our friend,
Defenders of truth, will provide.

They blow the ram's horn,
Which enemies scorn,
But Jerico's walls will fall down.
The gospel they preach,
With plainness of speech,
And Jesus their efforts will own.

To further his praise,
In these gospel days,
And sinners from darkness to turn.
From darkness to light,
By his Spirit's might,
Which makes their cold bosoms to burn.

With love to his will,
They long to fulfil,
Whate'er is enjoin'd or advis'd.
Themselves they deny,
With truth they comply,
And then in his name are baptiz'd.

"*One* faith" they possess,
"*One* Lord" they confess,
By immersion "*one* baptism" own:
One gospel they love,
One law they approve,
And *one*—Lord of all gladly crown.

ORIGINAL PIECES.

THE PLAGUE OF THE HEART.

The heart knoweth his own bitterness.—Prov. xiv. 10.

My present theme, with grief and shame I sing,
The mournful truth to tell, yet dare not hide.
That man is guilty, and throughout defil'd,
I feel too sad a proof, alas! within.
Through all my powers a vile contagion runs,
That taints each thought, and every action spoils,
My *head* is wholly sick, my *heart* is feint,
No part in me is sound—unclean I cry,
And view with shame my leprous spots deep stain'd.
With a disease that loathsome is, my loins
Are fill'd, and in the night my sore doth run,
Nor doth it cease by day, oozing corruption out.
Thus from my reins instruction I receive,
And learn that in my flesh there dwells no good,
The fountain's foul! the streams are all impure!

Through grace I hate, but cannot cease from sin,
Myself I loathe, and from myself would fly,
But can't escape, and being burden'd groan,
And for deliv'rance sigh.—With tears I wet
My sleepless couch; but still, alas! I'm bound,
Or moral death is bound to me; and hope
Of victory's weak:—"O wretched man," I cry,
And from my wounded aching heart, bursts forth,
In mournful accents deep, "Who shall deliver me?

Then look with longing eyes, and watch and wait
For days, and weeks, and months, and years, almost
In vain, for no complete deliv'rance comes.
(And you, my reader, if yourself you know,
To what I here have wrote, must needs subscribe.)

'Tis true, the snare is often broke (through grace,)
And I escape the net; but soon, alas!
Another web the artful fowler weaves,
My heedless feet to catch, and wound my soul,
Me piercing through, with sorrows deep infixt.

"*To will,*" what to my Lord well pleasing is,
"*I present find;*" but to perform the thing
That's truly good, *th' pow'r I cannot find,*
Except to *will* and *do* he kindly works.
(Say, tried believer, is 't not thus with you?)

I would indeed *do* good, and hate the ill I do,
But when that good to *do* I strive, I find
Sin present there, and all my efforts fail.
The thing I would not, I too often do,
And what I would, too often leave undone,
And to the law consent, that "*it is good.*"
O may I add, without offence to God,
Or to the godly, whom I truly love,
"*'Tis no more I*" that do the thing I hate,
But *sin* that in me dwells, and wars against
The grace of God, implanted in the soul.
I with the inward man, in God's good law
Delight, and with my mind that law I serve;
But in my members feel the law of sin,
And with my *flesh* too oft that law I serve,
Against my will, and to my constant grief.

With broken heart, and self abhorrence too,
I feel the *pest*, the *plague* of my own heart,
And, "wretched man," again I cry, and ask
Who shall deliv'rance bring *complete*, and *when*,
From this *base load*, so strongly *bound* to me?
My foe so often wounds, and casts me down,
In this *continued* war with flesh and blood,
And principalities, and powers base,
E'en those who rule the darkness of this world,
And in the sons of disobedience work;
That 'tis with trembling hope and feeble faith,
I say, "*thank God through Christ*," my gracious Lord.

I by the archers have been hurt—At me
They shot—and in a vital part they pierced,
With poison'd shafts, the victim of their rage;
And in the place of dragons I've been broke,
And o'er me oft the exulting foe hath stood,
And cried "*he's down, and he shall rise no more.*"
(And *this*, the lot of many is I know.

But, O, amazing!—Love and pow'r divine,
Oft from the dunghill of corruption foul,
And dust of self abasement, where I laid,
My beggar'd, begging soul hath lifted up.
To him therefore, the friend of friendless man,
Who me remember'd in my low estate,
My pray'r I will direct, and still look up:
In safety set my soul, shall be my plea,
From him who at me puffs, and pleads my cause
'Gainst every foe, that 'gainst me may arise,
Of earth or hell, within me or without.

And will not God a prisoner's groans attend,
Who night and day pours out his soul in tears?

He will! (though long his hand forbear) avenge
The needy soul, who for salvation sighs!
Yea, though he oft may fall, he still shall rise,
And though in darkness he may sit, the Lord
Shall be his light, his sun and shield.
Then O my weary soul, with every ill beset,
Be not cast down, though weak and friendless too,
Hope thou in God, *he* thy salvation is,
And thou shalt live (his word of grace is past,)
Through endless days, his saving grace to praise!

And now, my reader, whomsoe'er thou art,
A home-bred ploughman, or a school-bred priest,
A man of sober sense, or pedant proud,
An humble Mary, or censorious prude,
Whate'er you are (my reader) rich or poor,
Or young or old, or bound by men, or free,
Or rude, or polish'd, or sedate, or gay,
It matters not in this, one thing is clear,
No human being e'er knew God or truth,
That did not know himself a sinner vile,
Deprav'd throughout, from head to foot defil'd,
And from the heart confess'd—"*Behold I'm vile.*"

I know full well, the wise, in self conceit,
And pure in their own eyes, will censure me,
And blindly judge my language far too strong,
And say stand by, at humble distance keep.
But those whom God hath taught to know themselves,
Judge more correct—They feel within much more
Than I've advanced, and know the likeness just.

Be not discourag'd, friend, "*thy heart's prepared,*"
To thy blest Lord, salvation to ascribe,
And that *alone's* the blissful song of heaven—

Sung by the happy millions there, who lay
Themselves and crowns, low at their Saviour's feet.

While thus the believer is tried,
With the law of corruption within,
Foes press him on every side,
Against his dear Saviour to sin.
He thus his heart's bitterness knows,
As no one that's dead ever can,
But faith in the furnace *best* grows,
From that of a *babe* to a *man.*
Yet, though he in bitterness mourn,
O'er the plague of his own depraved heart,
He has joys (that infidels scorn,
In which they, alas, have no part,)
Which spring from the fountain of *love*,
And flow through a channel of *blood*—
E'en his who came down from above,
Whom once he so basely withstood—
Who for him a righteousness wrought,
And died his lost soul to redeem,
(Who, with a rich price being bought,
Th' good ways of his Lord doth esteem;)
Who vanquish'd and spoil'd his grand foe,
And o'er him triumph'd on the cross—
Then *sunk* to the sepulchre low,
And *rose* to declare who he was,
E'en Jesus—God's coequal Son,
With power to *quicken* and *save*,
Those for whom he victory won,
O'er *Satan*, and *Death*, and the *Grave!*

JOB'S AFFLICTIONS,

AND THE END OF THE LORD.

GREAT was the man I sing, for wealth renown'd,
But more for patience, piety and faith,
And heav'nly wisdom in an age so dark.
This man, so great, great sorrows did endure,
Though God he fear'd, and ev'ry evil shunn'd—
The most upright of men—God being judge.
But, oh! my soul, stand still and low adore,
What human reason cannot comprehend.
Satan, the arrant foe of God and man,
By God allow'd to plague the man he lov'd,—
To slay his servants and destroy his wealth—
Oxen and asses—rude Sabeans stole,
And slew their faithful keepers with the sword.
By fire mysterious, kindled by the foe,
The sheep and watchful shepherds all were burnt,
But one, who 'scap'd to tell the doleful news.
The cruel Chaldeans next, his camels steal,
Their keepers kill, and bear their plunder off,
And only one escapes, the man of God to tell.
But heav'er tidings yet astound his ear!—
The dread tornado's rais'd!—the whirlwind fierce,
Which in its forceful, whirling motion, smote
The house of mirth, the dwelling of his sons,
And threw the fabric down—crushing to death,
Beneath the ruin'd pile, th' unhappy guests,
Servants and sons, in one promiscuous heap!

Heart rending ills!—none but a parent's heart
Can truly feel, what Job must then have felt.
Oh! how a father's heart must yearn, to see

The mangled bodies of his seven sons,
Cut off while feasting high, (perhaps in sin!)
But oh! my soul, God's special grace admire,
In all this weight of woe Job sinned not,
Nor, fool like, with injustice charg'd his God.
But his integrity held fast, and Satan foil'd,
Altho' his wife, (the worst of snares when bad,)
Reproach'd and tempted him to curse his God and die,
And Satan charg'd with mercenary views,
And sought permission to afflict the *man*,
And pledg'd himself he'd curse his God to's face!

He's in thy hands, the Sov'reign Ruler said,
But, at thy peril, touch his precious life.
Forth went the foe of man, with malice fraught,
And smote the saint of God with burning biles—
Painful (in the extreme) to be endured,
And loathsome to himself and all his house;
Nor maids, or men, his voice obey'd when called.
In ashes vile the afflicted man sat down,
And with a potsherd scraped his fester'd skin,
To ease the anguish of the fi'ry pest.
For seven long days in silence deep he sat,
And by him sat, his three professed friends,
Then in stupendous grief, his natal day he cursed.

Thus Job, the *good* and *upright* man of Uz,
Was, by permission of his gracious God,
Through Satan's agency, severely tried.
His friends, mistaken, him revil'd and scorn'd,
(A work which friends at ease, can well perform,)
If friends they might be call'd, who shook their heads
At one so sore beset with grief intense,
And spoke not what was right of him, or God.

God's sov'reign acts they little understood,
And misconstrued his dealings with their friend;
Presuming, sorrows so exceeding great,
Bespoke foul crimes as great, in secret done.
Beneath such gross mistakes they labour'd hard
To prove the saint a hypocrite disguis'd,
And bitter words in scorn upon him heap'd.
But God his servant knew, (and he knew God)
And to his upright, patient dealings bore
A good report, which slander ne'er could shake,
And he in turn, spake noble things of God.
God lov'd the man, therefore the man lov'd God,
(As in his Son he had himself reveal'd,)
And each through love in commendation spake.
Whate'er of good the man possess'd, 'twas God
That good bestow'd, and own'd the work was his.
God in himself is good, supremely good,
And from him emanates, through Christ the Lord,
All earthly and eternal good to men.
How great that goodness is no tongue can tell,
Or what his beauty is no heart conceive,
For God, the great I AM, the three in one,
Eternal and unchangeably the same,
The just and holy Lord, and Saviour of
The lost, is dimly seen e'en in his word,
His radiance is so bright, his glory so immense,
And we by *nature* blind, by *grace* in part,
And only part, and that but small, we know.
But if like Job, our record is on high,
We soon shall know, e'en as we now are known.
Mistaken friends may scorn and say *stand by*,
You're so impure I fear you'll me disgrace;
But such had need beware, lest *self* and *pride*,
The basis of such conduct should be found!

To him who is distress'd kind pity should be shewn,
Our words should grief assuage, and strength convey,
And wine and oil into the spirit pour
Of the contrite, by sin or sorrow 'prest.
So did not Job's three friends, their words were like
Drawn swords, and on his troubled spirit wrought,
Like vinegar on nitre, freely pour'd.
But he, (though much appear'd amiss 'tis true)
Knew well by faith his great Redeemer liv'd,
(Who from all evil would his soul redeem,)
And that on earth his God in flesh he'd see,
Though worms should skin and flesh consume:
His Lord reprov'd, and purg'd him from his sins,
Whom now he saw in purity supreme,
Behold I'm vile, he said, and stopt his mouth.
And then (O wondrous grace!) it pleas'd the Lord,
His long and sore captivity to turn,
When for his three offending friends he pray'd,
Who spake not what was right, as Job had done,
Whom now the God of wisdom own'd, and said,
My servant Job, for you I will accept.
His horn was once defil'd in dust, but now,
Above his foes his head is lifted up;
Princes again shall listen to his speech,
And silence keep, while he the truth unfolds,
Nobles, and men of every grade give ear,
The youth with modesty retire, while men
Of years stand up, and all due deference pay.
Th' accusers now turn supplicants and pray
Their slander'd friend to act for them as *Priest!*
The cruel tongue of defamation's mute,
And Job, the friend of God, to honor rais'd.
Then God restor'd more than his foes had stole,
With seven stout sons, and lovely daughters three,
Th' unrival'd beauties of the land of Uz.

This *rich* man now, had many friends, who scorn'd
In deep adversity, his soul to know:
Such friends as these are numerous and cheap,
Who slander when they ought to sympathize;
My soul into their secret never come,
Nor be my honor with them ever join'd.
Such are the fickle ways of men; but God,
Howe'er he may chastise, and hide his face,
Is of one mind, and doth at all times love,
And to his own, sticks closer than a brother doth.

Then trust not thy own heart, thou feeble saint,
Nor yet thy fellow man, whose help is vain,
But trust with all thy heart, in Job's Almighty friend,
Who ne'er forsook his servant in distress.
Whose great affliction we have seen with pain,
And view'd with pleasure God's most gracious *end*.
Then let his holy Name be magnified,
By all on earth, and all the glorified.

THE HEIRS OF LIFE.

If children, then heirs, &c.—Rom. viii. 17.

The heirs of life are now my chosen theme,
O may I trace their lineaments correct,
As guided by a monitor divine,
Nor aught distort, nor aught through fear conceal,
But all their comely parts display to view,
And their uncomely ones with grief confess.
But e'er I do proceed I fain would ask,
Dost thou, in truth, my reader, long to know,
If thou an heir of life art made? Then read,

With pray'r, what for thy good I here present
In this, my feeble, unembellish'd song.

And be it known to thee, truth being judge,
The heirs of life are those whom God ordain'd,
To life eternal e'er the world began.
Gave to his Son, and gave them life in him—
Those whom the Son receiv'd, to union with
Himself, the living and life *giving* head.
Whom to *redeem*, of woman he was made,
And liv'd obedient, and obedient died,
The precept thus fulfilling, and the curse
In ev'ry form endured, as God's pure Lamb—
From the beginning slain, in purpose and in type,
For whom the holy Jesus *sin* was made,
(Though hard to be believ'd) sin to atone—
For whom the blest Redeemer on the cross,
The prince of hell, (who had the pow'r of death)
In single combat fought, and overthrew.

For these (with him joint heirs) the Saviour *rose*,
And in the majesty of God went up,
The grand designs of love to carry on,
And bring th' heirs home unto their Father, God,
That with their elder Brother they might dwell.

But some, perhaps, may say—It may be so—
The heirs of life may be the ones you draw—
For whom such great and glorious things were done,
And still are doing—But still, the record
None e'er saw. If it exists, 'tis hidden deep
From mortal eyes—for secret things to God belong.

That is a point I readily concede.
But must we hence infer that things so deep,

And only known to God, are ne'er reveal'd?
(For if reveal'd, they then belong to us.)
God doubtless doth make known what eye ne'er saw,
What ear hath never heard, nor heart conceiv'd.

From wise and prudent men, who scorn to learn
Of him who lowly was, God much conceals;
But to his own the secrets of his heart unfolds,
And shews their souls the cov'nant of his love.

'Tis true, the sacred page of holy writ
Doth never *name* the men whom God ordain'd
Heirs of endless life, and gave his equal Son;
And whom the Son in mercy did accept—
For whom he liv'd—and died—and rose again—
And for whom still as intercessor lives.
Yet, is a work of grace so fair *impress'd*
Upon the souls of men, by God, that he
Who runs may read, (if he has eyes to see,)
Upon the forehead writ, of those renew'd,
These are the heirs of life—the heirs of God!
The image and the superscription's plain.

Has God ordain'd to life some certain men,
The fruit of everlasting love in Christ?
With pow'r divine, (which cannot be o'ercome)
And loving kindness, them he *therefore* draws—
Out of his righteous law, their souls are taught,
And sore chastis'd for sin, now seen and felt:
Then having heard, and of the Father learn'd
That they are vile, and he is just and good,
They come to Christ his Son, as by the *Spirit led;*
For 'tis the *Spirit's* work, men to convince of sin
And blinded souls to lead in ways unknown,

To make gross darkness light, that sinners lost
May know themselves, and Christ the rock embrace,
And shelter find in him from wrath to come,
And Jesus follow in that hallow'd way,
Which he as Lord in his own house prescrib'd.

Such are the heirs of life.—By God belov'd,
By the great Son redeem'd from endless woe,
And by the Spirit call'd and born again;
Who by his gracious aid, can Abba, Father, say,
And live a life the carnal cannot live,
A life of faith unfeign'd, and humble pray'r,
That sin may be subdu'd and self deny'd,
And Christ be honour'd as their rightful Lord,
Whom though they have not seen, they dearly love,
And feel him precious in their heart's esteem,
And trust his promise to hold on their way.
(Though Satan, world, and flesh combine to tempt,
Corruptions rise, and for the mast'ry strive,
And faith is weak, and hope almost expires;
But faith can't die, nor can their hope be sham'd,
For Christ's their author, object, and their end.)

Such love his follow'rs too, as fellow heirs of
The grace of life, and brethren in the faith,
The faith of God's elect, more precious far
Than gold, or aught on earth that can be nam'd.

These are the heirs of life, and ne'er can die,
So spoke the Son of God: "The man that lives
And in me doth believe, shall never die."
(O gracious words from Jesus' faithful lips,)
Conjointly heirs they are, with Christ their Lord,

In whom their life is hid and safely kept;
And when he comes they with him shall be seen!

These blessed truths, the theme of this rude song,
In characters of gold, are worthy to be writ,
For the high honors of a triune God,
And safety of believing souls, are there
Deeply involv'd, and gloriously display'd,
And court the grateful wonder of mankind.
Such know and love, the truths that made them free,
And wisdom's ways are pleasantness to them,
Who love the saints, and with them cast their lot.

With their hearts plague, such well acquainted are,
And loathe themselves in dust, and sin abhor,
Yet sin bemoan'd remains, and struggles hard to rule,
But grace shall reign, the God of grace hath said.
Those therefore who are weak, may say they're strong,
Strong in their Lord, and in his pow'rful might,
And strong in grace—the grace that is *in Christ*,
And through rich grace, shall more than conq'rers be!

Whoe'er thou art that reads, I thee entreat,
With deep attention, and with pray'r too,
These outlines well to weigh.—*Art thou the man*,
Hast thou by God been taught, to know thyself?
And do'st thou trust in him, who died to save?
Do'st thou him love, his people and his ways,
(Though *he* and *his* are both despis'd by men,
And his good ways, by many quite forsook.)
Do'st thou thyself *(more than all men)* abhor?
(Mark that, my friend, 'tis worthy your regard,
Some who their *neighbours loathe*, themselves admire!
And say stand by, presume not to approach,

Lest you my holy garments should defile,
Their hearts with *pride*, and self complaisance swoln;
But what saith God? The proud I do abhor,
And their proud deeds in anger will reward;
But look with favour on the broken heart,
And dwell with him in love, who is contrite,
His spirit to revive, and broken heart to bind.)
But to return,—one question more I ask,
Say, dost thou strive through grace to follow Christ,
Through evil fame, and good report, and pour
Thy humble pray'r to him for help against
Thyself, the worst of all thy foes? *If so,*
Thou art an heir of life. Thy title's clear.
For heirs of *wrath*, *(the dead in sin)* can't move,
Nor feel, nor fear, nor love, nor strive 'gainst sin,
Nor know the Shepherd's voice, nor follow him,
No more than corpses from their graves can rise,
Or stop the progress of corruption foul,
No more than man, beneath the foaming flood can live,
Or beasts, with the aspiring eagle soar;
No more, than can the rampant lion fierce,
Be with the spider's slender web enchain'd,
Or rocks of adamant, of bulk immense,
Be with a flexile feather cleft in twain;
No more than tones divinely sweet, can charm
(Though wisely sung,) the adder's deafen'd ear,
Or Afric's sable sons their colour change,
And leopards wild, their native spots expunge.

Then fear ye not, ye that in Zion mourn,
Your lamentation shall to joy be turn'd,
Though each himself despise. *God hails you blest*
As of immortal life, the rightful heirs!

But O! my reader, if thou a stranger art,
To this good work of grace upon thy soul,
Thou art, as all, alas! by nature are,
An heir of wrath, the just desert of sin.
May *He*, who *can*, your state to you make known,
Dispose your heart his counsel to regard,
And good instruction from his word receive,
That in your latter end you may be wise;
But to be wise, thou must become a fool,
Thy *wisdom* and thy *righteousness* renounce,
And refuge take in him, who died for sin,
That sinners, chief of sinners, might be sav'd.

No other name beneath the heav'ns is given,
Whereby a sinner must, or can be sav'd.
Whoe'er in him believes from wrath is free,
But he that don't believe must die the death.

Faith doth by hearing come; then hear the word
And dig for knowledge as for treasure hid;
For he that findeth wisdom, findeth life,
And of the Lord free favour doth obtain,
E'en life eternal, as his sov'reign gift,
Through Christ his Son, the Saviour of the lost.

THE JOYFUL SOUND,

AND THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO KNOW IT.

Good is the word of the Lord. Psa. lxxxix. 15. Isa. xxxix. 8.

Blest are the favour'd souls, both bond and free,
Learned, or rude, or rich, or poor, who know
(Not those who hear alone, but those who know)

The glorious gospel's sweet and joyful sound.
Which as a means in great Jehovah's hand,
Sets forth the Saviour crucified for sin,
And liberty proclaims to captive souls.
The prison opens to the soul that's bound,
And health and cure to the diseased brings;
That binds the broken heart by sin oppress'd,
And comfort speaks to all who mourn for sin;
That makes the spirit glad which lowly stoops,
In heaviness extreme, beneath a load of guilt,
By making known the pardon of a God.
That succours tempted souls, *when own'd of God*,
And strengthens feeble knees, and lifts the hands
And drooping head, which like a bulrush bows,
Oppress'd with sense of sin, perceiv'd and felt.

This joyful sound the word of truth and grace,
The wanderers from the fold of Christ reclaims,
And brings them back, with broken hearts and bones,
Heals their backslidings foul, and God reveals,
As slow to anger, pard'ning those he loves,
Who loathe themselves as chief of sinners vile.
It gives assurance to the man who feels
The plague of his own heart (the thorn that wounds)
That in his need, the grace and strength of Christ,
Shall be sufficient to preserve his soul.

Such is the glorious gospel of the blessed God;
That gospel Christ and his apostle's preach'd,
And that which ministers *of Christ* still preach;
Good news to guilty men, which loud proclaims
The Lord's anointed Son as Saviour of the *lost*,
Who liv'd despis'd by men, and died to save

That chosen flock, which to his charge was given;
For them a servant he became, beneath
His Father's righteous law, which he fulfill'd,
And bore its curse upon the 'cursed tree;
When he could say, as none beside e'er could,
That such his sorrows were, as man ne'er felt,
For he the crimes of *many* bore, and wrath
Proportion'd justly to their dread desert.
And made an open shew before the sun,
Of all his foes, and bow'd his head in death;
But speedy rose a victor o'er the grave,
And at his chariot wheels the spoiler dragg'd,
And reassum'd his ancient rightful throne.
There still he sits in majesty divine,
And sways his sceptre o'er the world he made,
As head supreme o'er all things to the church,
That he might life eternal give to all
The Father chose, and gave him to redeem
From ev'ry evil, with his precious blood.

O may this gospel far and wide be spread,
And God the Holy Ghost, *confirm* the same,
That faith in Jesus may by hearing come,
And chief of sinners pass *from* death *to* life,
And *on*, and *to* him live, who died for them,
The Just and Holy One, for the unjust.

Thou, Lord, in sov'reign mercy gave the word,
Rich with the blood and labours of thy Son.
O let the number it proclaims be great,
And cause them to and fro with zeal to run,
That knowledge of thy way may be increas'd,
Till thy salvation shall be known on earth,
E'en from the rising to the setting sun.

O teach thy servants to divide thy word,
And give to each what to them belong.

So shall the trumpet give a certain sound,
And men be warn'd to flee from wrath to come,
To that dear man (the Lord from heav'n who is
By thee set forth, a hiding place from storms,
And covert from the tempest of thy wrath,
Who bore that tempest from thy vengeful hand,
In body and in soul upon the cross.

That, and that *only*, is the joyful sound,
Which God for purposes so great doth own.
And only *they*, the joyful sound do *know*,
Who through grace have believ'd, and *so believ'd*,
As in their hearts to feel, and happily possess,
The great and glorious things thus briefly sung.
On such the blessing of the Lord doth rest,
And he that's blest of him is blest indeed,
And *shall* be *blest*, the blessed God hath said,
With ev'ry good, and life for evermore.
Thus blest are they who know the joyful sound.

But, O my soul, if they alone are blest,
Where shall the sinner and ungodly stand,
From whom the gospel of our God is hid,
Whose minds are blinded, and whose hearts
Are harden'd by the god of this vain world,
In whose rebellious ways destruction is,
And mis'ry great, foreboding wrath to come,
Who never knew (in truth) the way of peace,
Nor is the fear of God before their eyes.

If suffer'd thus to *die*, alas! my soul,

They cannot stand in judgment, *God hath said*,
But sink they must, to endless shame and woe.

But stay thy hand, thou God of mercy stay,
Cut not the fruitless cumb'rers down in wrath,
But speak the word of grace, and bid them live,
And that blest word for ever shall stand fast;
For what *thou* do'st, *thou* it for *ever* doth,
Thy *will*, nor *love*, no *changes* ever knew,
And therefore 'tis, thy saints are ne'er *consum'd*,
But live a life, as *endless* as their *Lord!!!*

A SOLILOQUY,

ON THE CRUCIFIXION, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.—Prov. xxiii, 7.

THINK on that solemn, solemn day, my soul,
When God his glitt'ring sword of justice 'woke
Against the Shepherd of his chosen flock,
(Which in his soul the pains of hell infix'd,)
And his anointed Son in wrath cut off!

When earth convuls'd to its deep centre quak'd.
And heav'n's bright orb of day in sackcloth clad,
Hid his resplendent beams, and three long hours
The earth in gloomy darkness veil'd, (asham'd
To view the horrid deed, when wicked men
The Saviour slew, and hung him on a tree!)
When yawning graves gave up the slumb'ring dead,
And rocks of adamant were rent in twain,
When dire amazement seiz'd the priestly tribe,

Appall'd their hearts, and turn'd their faces pale,
To see the temple's gorgeous veil untouch'd
By mortal hands, from top to bottom rent!

Think, O my soul, what caus'd that tragic scene,
And with humility and shame reflect
'Twas Sin! that fruitful source of human ills,
Which God insulted on his awful throne,
And call'd for vengeance on the guilty race!

But think again, my soul, and wond'ring view,
The amazing love of God to guilty man.
'Twas wondrous love!—He spared not his Son,
But freely for the guilty gave him up
To die beneath his curse, the just for the unjust!
Herein *is* love—love passing thought of man,
Not that *we* loved God, but *He* lov'd us!

My soul with gratitude unfeign'd reflect
On him who left (that thou might never die)
His inaccessible high throne of light,
And in his grace immense, though rich, became
Abjectly poor, and had not where to lay
His blessed head, though he had all things made,
And angels worshipp'd him as *Lord* of all!
This *was his* right, and his great Father's will!
But *man* dar'd to despise, and to reject,
And treat the Lord with scorn, whom heav'n ador'd!

A man of sorrows he became—Sorrows
Such as man ne'er knew, and with grief intense,
From *God* and *man*, acquainted was his soul.
For thus the prophet spake: "It pleas'd the *Lord* to bruise

And put his spotless soul to grief profound,"
To make his life an offering for sin,
Though *sin*, nor *guile*, was never found in *Him!*

To men who pluck'd the hair, he gave his cheek,
From spitting and from shame, his sacred face
He never hid, and to the smiters gave his back,
Who plough'd (in wrath) long furrows there, and deep,
And in their malice shed his precious blood!

O love unsearchable, than death more strong,
Which floods of wrath immense could never drown!

The law he magnified, and bore its curse,
Finish'd transgression thus, and made an end
Of sin, and for lost man's iniquity
Reconciliation made, and brought in
A righteousness as lasting as his throne,
With which the Eternal Father is well pleas'd,
In which believing souls are justified!

Solomon the wise, hath truly said, "as
In his heart man thinketh, e'en *so* he is."
Whether (of Christ) his thoughts be good or ill.
Then think again, my soul, and think in faith,
That he who died upon the accursed tree,
And spoiled principalities and pow'rs,
Soon burst the barriers of the greedy grave,
And sprang victorious from the gates of death.
Thus prov'd himself to be the Son of God,
With pow'r to *give*, and *take* his life again,
To save from sin and hell his chosen seed!

What shall I render, O my soul, to God
Who gave his Son; and to the Son who died
(To save from wrath to come, so vile a worm;)
And to the Spirit ever blest, who doth,
The Father and the Son, to men reveal,
One dying *for*, the other pard'ning sin,
O may I *love*, with heart, and mind, and strength,
And yield obedience uniform and free,
In newness of the Spirit, as a Son.

Again, my soul, thy *risen* Saviour trace,
In contemplation sweet (as aided by
The inspir'd page) through all the various steps
That led from misery supreme, to that
Blest height, where thrones and heav'nly pow'rs,
Are subject to his sway! The Son of God,
With pow'r declar'd, (by rising from the dead)
His high commands to his apostles gave,
To go into the world, and freely give,
What they from him, so freely had receiv'd,
To preach his glorious gospel, and baptize
In the great name of the great sacred Three,
And teach poor sinners sav'd, what to observe.

As sheep 'mongst rav'nous wolves, he sent them forth,
Be *wise* (he said) as subtle serpents are,
And *harmless* as the faithful turtle-dove,
And lo! (the omnipresent Saviour said,)
I with you present *am*, in all your straits,
As *sun* and *shield* always, till time shall end!

Thus having said, the Saviour God went up,
With sound of trump, in majesty divine,

To his high throne, (forerunner of his church)
In sight of his astonish'd, favour'd friends.

Captive he led in chains his vanquish'd foes,
And gifts receiv'd for poor rebellious men,
That God the Lord might with them ever dwell!
O think, my soul, on grace so *rich*, so *free*,
So *sov'reign*, *suitable*, and *undeserv'd*.

Her everlasting gates heav'n open'd wide,
And *him* receiv'd with high acclaim, as King
Of kings, the Lord of Hosts in battle strong.

Then rang those happy realms with hallelujahs loud,
To him who liv'd *despis'd*, and died to *save*.
Who soon will re-appear to judge the world,
And crown with righteousness divine, all those
(Of ev'ry name) who his appearing love!

Come quickly, come dear friend of sinners lost,
And thou, my soul, cleave to thy Lord in faith,
And laud him Lord of all, thy only hope,
The *first*, the *last*, *God* ever blest, Amen!

CONCLUSION.

And now, my reader kind, if truth you know,
And truth hath made you free, one boon I ask:
Beseech with me, the Spirit of our God,
The truths I've feebly wrote to own,
That men with one accord may Christ confess,
God over all, for ever bless'd, Amen.

The first, the last, eternally the same,
The omnipresent and omniscient God,
All potent too, who to the utmost saves.
In righteousness he speaks, and travels in
The greatness of his strength, mighty to save.
Thus speaks the prophet of the Lord: *Behold!*
With arm well fit to rule, and hand of might,
The Lord our God will soon appear! (to save
His own, and crush his stubborn foes) his work
Before him is, and with him too, his great
Reward: He like a shepherd good, shall feed
His purchas'd flock, the price of his own blood:
(The Almighty Father's sovereign gift of love!)
He'll kindly gather in his arms the lambs,
And bear them near his heart, from harm secure!
With care, and gentleness divine he'll lead
Those of his flock belov'd, who are with young,
As to himself most dear, and he to them.
(For love of God made known, doth love produce,
He lov'd us first, (said John,) and we love him!
Creator he of all that lives, or moves,
And all at *rest*, (if such his works contain)
In heaven, or earth, or in the deep profound,
Who all things doth uphold, and governs well
The complicated works of his own hands,
Which to *his* glory tend, who made them all,
Where his eternal pow'r is clearly seen,
For light ineffable proclaims *the* God,
Who on his works has writ his glorious name!
And left rebellious man without excuse,
Who do not him confess, the Mighty God,
And worship give in spirit and in truth,
As thou, Almighty Father, hast ordain'd!
To those, who warn'd of God his judgments see,
And seek from wrath deserv'd a safe retreat,
To such a hiding place he is from storms,

From tempest dire, a covert sure, and shade
Of rocks stupendous, in a weary land,
And in a place that's dry, as rivers full
Of water, cooling to the thirsty soul.

But some, through unbelief, make him a rock
Of great offence; and on that stumbling stone,
In blindness fall, and crush their souls to death!
So righteous Father, in thy awful sight,
In mercy, and in wrath, it seemed good,
Thy truth to hide from men inflate with pride,
And unto babes in grace reveal thy son!

Next may the Spirit of unerring truth
Teach saints to know God's love is like himself,
Which knows no end, unchangeably the same.
From hell Christ did redeem those whom of old
He lov'd; and whom in time from sin he calls,
To know his name, and put their trust in him,
And live his praise before the sons of men;
Who though they oft offend, he never leaves
But visits with a rod, and makes them mourn,
And loathe themselves, for all the ills they've done.
So grace, free grace divine, triumphant reigns
Through righteousness, unto eternal life,
(The sov'reign gift of God as death's the fruit of sin)
By Christ the Lord, who liv'd, and dy'd, and rose!

Nor shall the gates of hell find cause to boast,
That to their wish their malice hath prevail'd,
Against the flock of Christ! *He lives, and they,*
Who by him were redeem'd and call'd, *shall live,*
Himself hath said; nor can his word e'er fail!
I am the Lord thy God, Jehovah said,
From Egypt's land of darkness and of toil,
My purpose is, that you no God but me
Shall know; for none but me a Saviour is!

Yet will God his honor vindicate and shew
That sin he hates, though in a Son most dear,
And pleasant child, as Ephraim of old.
But while he hates their sins, he will not give
His foes their will, nor banish those he loves.
Repentance kindles, and his bowels move,
And earnestly he doth remember those
'Gainst whom he speaks, and their backslidings heals!

Such are the ways of God! so far above
The ways of men; e'en those who know his name,
Who oft through pride, unknowing of themselves,
Self will'd, and emulous of human praise;
(Regardless of *his* will, who says, forgive,
Restore, and to your arms receive, and love
Confirm; as I, for sake of him who died,
Have done!)—they say, stand by, we holier are
Than thou, and scorn to own, as one of them
The soul once fall'n, though now restor'd and heal'd,
And all to feed the pride of prudes, or men
Who little know of God, or of his gracious ways,
But show too plain, (though unawares I hope,)
Their *tender mercies* cruel, like th' unjust;
But thanks unfeign'd, and praise to God is due,
All are not thus; there are, and not a few,
Whose bosoms with compassion burn, to those
Whom grace immense, recalls from ways of sin,
Such honor God, and not disgrace themselves!

Once more with me entreat, ye friends of truth,
That Zion's King, would own my last essay,
That humble subjects of his grace may learn,
(From him who taught, as none beside e'er did)
To see his will, in his appointments wise,
And be baptiz'd, as those who have believ'd,
And tasted that the Lord is good indeed!

One Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism thus,
Through grace receiv'd, they love, possess, and own.
And like their Lord, all righteousness fulfil;
And as he strength affords him glorify,
To put to silence those who evil speak,
of his good ways, the ways of truth and grace.

Thus own'd of God, my efforts can't be vain,
Nor labour lost, in Jesus' righteous cause.
Tho' some with high disdain, incas'd in steel
And adamant, my feeble strokes may scorn,
And in their rampant pride, snuff up the wind
Of pestilential errors poisonous breath,
And set their mouths 'gainst heav'ns eternal King!
Till he, or in his mercy, or his wrath,
Their rebel souls subdue beneath his feet.

All knees to him *must* bow—all tongues confess,
That he is Lord of all his hands have made,
To *his* high glory, who hath thus decreed,
And set him King of kings, on Zion's hill!
Ye sons of men be wise and kiss the Son,
Lest haply ye his kindled wrath should feel,
And perish from his ways, beneath his rod.
Thrice bless'd are they, by grace, who in him trust,
And on him live, devoted to his will.

O may the author of these broken thoughts,
And all who read the same, or love the truths
Therein contain'd, be guided in his strength,
(Through evil fame, and good report,) unto
His holy habitation in the skies,
His blissful face in righteousness to see,
And bear his likeness, fully satisfied,
And God, through endless days, be *all in all!*

AN ADDRESS

To those who have read the preceding pages.

PERMIT me, my reader, at the close of this little, but, I hope, not unimportant work, inasmuch as it treats of things relating to, and inseparably connected with the never dying soul: and what shall it profit a man if he gain the world and lose it? verily nothing: permit me then, I say, respectfully and affectionately to ask you, what have been your feelings and reflections on the perusal of the foregoing pages? Have they been of that nature, as to make self and sin more loathsome, and Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, who died the just, for the unjust, and in whom all the promises of God are yea and Amen, more precious, or at least, more desirable? The judgment of my readers will be very various, no doubt. Some, it is feared, will treat what has been advanced with scorn, as, in all probability, they do the word of God itself, from whence my various matter is drawn. The plainness of its dress—the want of those fascinating embellishments, that the wisdom of this world furnishes, offends what they vainly consider their *refined*, but which is, in truth, their *vitiated taste*. A precious Saviour has always been disallowed of men, though chosen of God, and precious to him that believes, and the truth of God, and the ordinances of God, and the people of God, and every thing that does, in truth, belong to the spiritual kingdom of Christ Jesus, has always been lightly esteemed by men dead in sin, but whatever, under a shew of religion, is of *man's* device, is palatable to *men*. And such would do well to consider, that he who scorns *the truth*, as it is in Jesus, must bear his burden. If such, like Pilate, should say,

What is truth? I will answer in the language of the inimitable Cowper—

> "What's that which brings contempt upon a book
> And him who writes it?—— —— ——
> —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— ——
> —— —— —— —— —— —— ——
> Tell *me*—and I will tell *thee* what is *truth*.

Others of my readers, whose minds are blinded with error and prejudice, by the agency of Satan, "the God of this world"—2 Cor. iv. 4.—shut their eyes against the light, like the moles and the bats, when involuntarily brought before the splendor of the meridian sun, and the shafts of truth, (though drawn from the quiver of God,) being thrown by such a feeble hand, rebound from their adamantine hearts, as the blunted spear from the impenetrable shield of Achilles, or scales of leviathan—but whoever hates and shuns the light, is in imminent danger of stumbling on the dark mountains—Jer. xiii. 16.—and whoever mocks at God and truth, is in danger of having his bonds made strong—Isa. xxvi. 22. But I would fain hope, that he who opens the eyes of the blind, and breaks the obdurate heart, may in some happy instances bring down the proud looks of the scorner, and cause the blind, (who grope for the wall at noon day—Isa. lix. 10.) to see out of obscurity and out of darkness, and whenever such see a little, though only men (as it were) as trees walking, they will covet more, and pray: O Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wonders of thy word—happy men, who from the heart so pray—they will not abide in darkness, for the Lord leadeth the blind by a way that they know not, and makes darkness light before them—Isa. xlii. 16.—and to accomplish such glorious ends, I feel happily persuaded, that no instrument or means can be weak in *His* hands, who ordaineth strength (even) in the mouth of babes, to perfect praise, and still the enemy and the avenger.—Ps. viii. 2.

At any rate, I hope, that through an unction from the Holy One, poor sinners, under the awakening influence of the Spirit of God, will find something in these pages, that will say to them (as an index pointing to him who died without the gate) this is the way, walk ye in it—and which may encourage them to "*Stand still* and see the salvation of God."

"*Stand still*, says one, that's easy sure,
'Tis what I always do;
Mistaken soul, be not deceiv'd,
This is not meant for you.

"Not driv'n by *fear*, nor drawn by *love*,
Nor yet by *duty* led,
Lie still you do, and never move,
For who can move that's dead.

"But for a living soul to stand,
By thousand dangers scar'd,
And fell destruction close at hand,
O that indeed is hard." HART.

And while I would cherish a hope, that such characters as I have already named, may be benefited by what they are here presented with, I would also hope, that such as have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who may *condescend* to peruse my treatment of the foregoing subjects, whatever may be their exercises, or present state of mind, whether on Pisgah's mount, or in the valley of humiliation, or if so unhappy as to be in the ditch, where their own clothes abhor them, I hope I say, that they may find good. I am fully persuaded, that however feeble the execution of this little work, there is something that is suited to most cases, that each may have their portion in season, through the good will of him, whose blessing maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow therewith. I hope therefore that these efforts of my pen (though feeble) will not be in vain; but that hereby a dear and almigh-

ty Redeemer may appear with new charms, as "the chiefest of ten thousand and altogether lovely. *Gain has never been my object;* but to do good by the promulgation of *divine truth.* And altho' the diction of this little production may not to some be the most pleasing, being homely, yet it may be the most profitable; "words easy to be understood, are certainly the best words to convey *religious* truths in, for "to the *poor* the gospel is preached," and for them also it is wrote.

No pretensions are here urged to any thing beyond *theological* correctness, at least, that approximation to correctness which, while it solicits a *friendly correction,* challengeth a *hostile refutation.*

As to the poetic pieces, (if they will bear such an appellation) I will only say the same as of the prose, that they contain *scriptural ideas, gospel truths,* and *sound experience,* and like the prose, have afforded me both pleasure and profit in the composition, and my hope is, that my readers may reap the same advantage; and in that hope I will close, with a few lines of the truly excellent and *well* instructed Mr. Hart, of whom his biographer has truly said, "He preached Evangelical truths practically, and practical truths Evangelically."

"And now the work is done,
Without much pains or cost,
The author's merit none,
And therefore none his boast;
He only claims whate'er's amiss,
Alas! how great a share is his.

"Some time it took to beat,
And hunt for tinkling sound,
But th' rich savory meet
Was very quickly found:
For ev'ry truly christian thought,
Was by the God of Jacob brought."

Even so, Amen.

FINIS.

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